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DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION ISSUE

OBAMA'S CREATION MYTH
JOHN B. JUDIS

IS HE GOD?
JONATHAN CHAIT

WELL, HE RESURRECTED JOHN KERRY
JASON ZENGERLE

THE DECLINE AND RISE OF ORATORY
JOHN MCWHORTER

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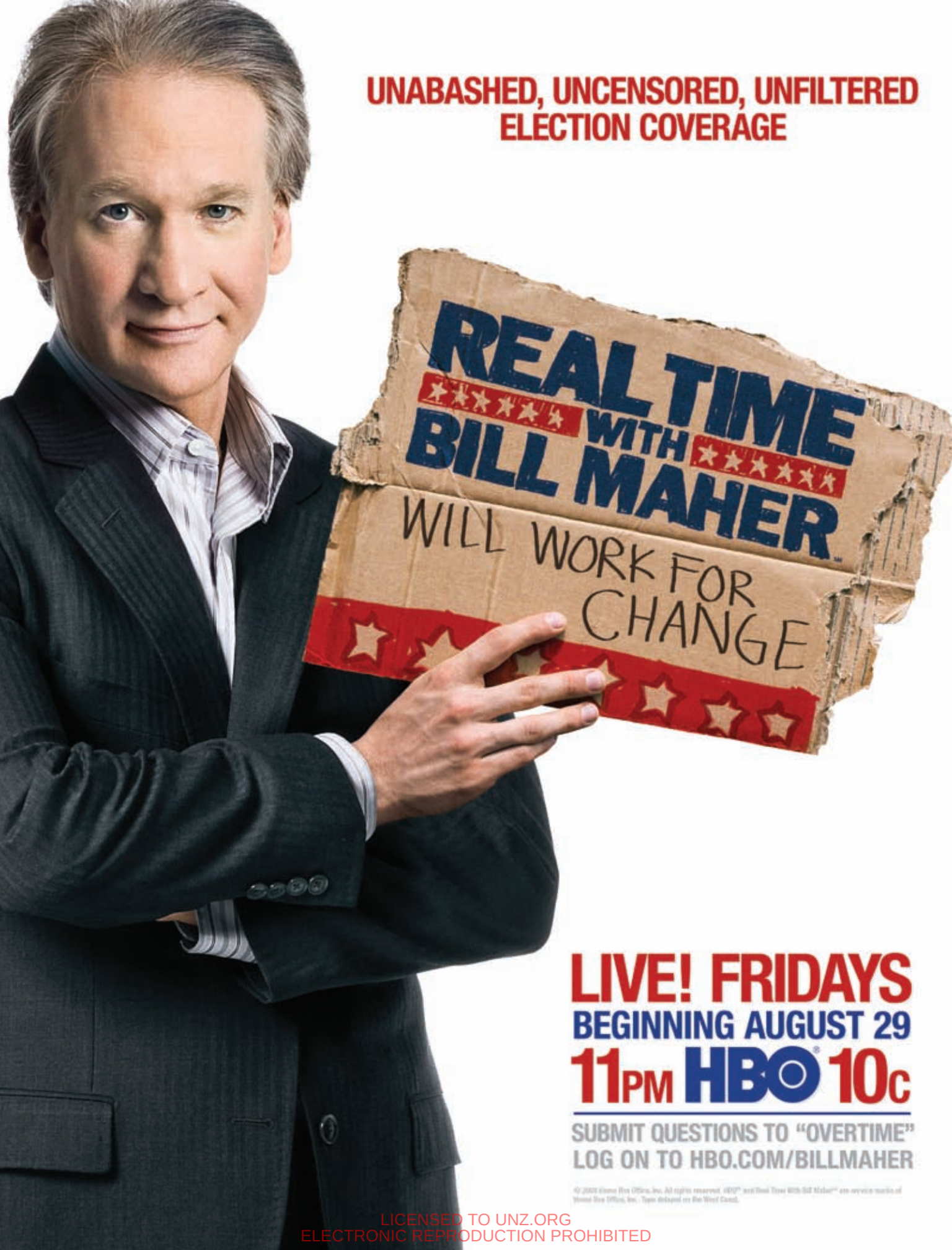

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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It Takes Two to Tangle

A REFRESHER LESSON for some of our brothers and sisters in political journalism: There's this thing called a general election. And, in a general election, candidates representing the two major political parties vie to become president. We're sure that most of our colleagues know about this—or, at least, have heard it mentioned. But we feel obliged to reiterate it, because a broad swath of media has treated this election as if it were a one-man race. Watchdog groups, on both the right and left, have conducted surveys confirming the press's narrow focus on Barack Obama. The Project for Excellence in Journalism, for instance, has found that Obama "significantly featured" in 79 percent of newspaper stories in the two months following his primary victory. Only 54 percent of the stories gave McCain the same treatment.

Strangely, John McCain has joined the chorus griping about this asymmetry. His campaign has carped, "It's pretty obvious that the media has a bizarre fascination with Barack Obama." It is strange for McCain to level this charge, because he's been the prime beneficiary of media inattention. While the press has devoted countless stories to dissecting Obama's basketball game, all the cocktail parties he ever graced in Hyde Park, and every vote he cast as a state senator, large tracts of McCain's record have been untouched by reporters. There have been stunningly few stories revisiting the wild vicissitudes of McCain's recent political career. Less than five years ago, McCain was basically spearheading the Democratic agenda in the Senate—from taxes to government reform—and then, in a flash, he abandoned most of these progressive positions when he decided to run for the Republican nomination in 2008. What does that say about the man? Most voters don't know, because most voters haven't read about this period in the newspaper or heard about it on television. And there are plenty of other parts of the McCain record that reporters have skated past on their way to discovering Obama's long-lost half-brother or some other triviality.

The fault doesn't just lie with the press. As many have noticed, Obama neglected to point out the shortcomings and inconsistencies of his opponent for most of the summer. He may have invested too much in his European tour and not enough in defining the stakes of this election. Apparently, summer is not Barack Obama's best season. Last year, he similarly squandered media hype and public interest as he let Hillary Clinton coast past him unblemished until the last weeks before the Iowa caucus. His strategists seem to believe you best protect your candidate's image—and best damage your opponent—if you sit on your ammunition until the right moment.

It seems they believe that moment has now arrived. During the past week, Obama has begun to hit McCain hard and at his weakest point—his radical economic package, whose basics he grasps only tenuously. As Obama takes up this cutting critique, there will be inevitable panic. Some will say this new rhetoric doesn't suit him well—just as they decried Al Gore's attacks on the "powerful"—and they will call it a deviation from his promise to transcend old political divisions and heal the nation's rifts. (Fortunately, Obama's populism seems to be considerably less crude than Gore's 2000 iteration.) Indeed, the polls may show some reason for concern. That's because, when you're trying to define your opponent, it takes time for your case to set in. (It took the public two weeks to fully absorb McCain's fusillade against Barack Obama's celebrity.)

STEPH/POOL/ZUMA PICTURES

This new line of attack will not come naturally to Obama. As John B. Judis notes in this issue (see p. 18), there's a certain irony to his political career. Obama entered politics as a community organizer, schooled in persuading people by appealing to their self-interest. But, as a candidate for president, he has talked less about the self-interest of voters than about reform and hope and change and lobbyists, using language and appeals that don't speak all that directly to people's concerns about their own economic well-being.

If he doesn't feel completely comfortable speaking this language, he doesn't have much choice. An Obama loss would be truly astounding given the public's grim mood about the economy, but at the moment polls suggest it is entirely possible. His lackadaisical summer of shaved ice and European tours has hardly undermined him in any sort of catastrophic way. But it's time to realize that this election will slip away if he doesn't play his best hand. ◆

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The Messiah-Complex Complex

The right's silly obsession with the Obama "cult."

JONATHAN CHAIT

Of all the complaints made against Barack Obama, the one I least understand is that he's some kind of millennial cult leader. An ad for John McCain and endless conservative commentary have harped on the theme of what *National Review* editor Rich Lowry called Obama's "secular messianism." Conservatives have sternly lectured Obama's fans that he will not, in fact, deliver paradise if elected. I agree! But why is this a reason to vote against him? McCain isn't going to create heaven on earth, either. Obama, however, might deliver health care reform and a more moderate federal judiciary.

The image of Obama as a messianic figure rests upon an endlessly repeated litany of bogus particulars. The first is that Obama's fans faint at his speeches. Again, I fail to appreciate the horrors of having a president whose rhetoric is so inspiring that it causes listeners to faint. In any case, Obama isn't actually *that* good a speaker. People faint at public gatherings all the time, especially when they're in a warm building for a long time without enough to drink. People faint at rallies for other candidates, too—Obama's fainters just started to get reported on after the cult idea arose.

The second factoid is that Oprah Winfrey called Obama "The One." What Winfrey actually said was, "I am here to tell you, Iowa, he is the one!" Inevitably, conservative critics capitalize the phrase ("The One") to create an impression of creepy messianism. In any case, when you are trying to persuade your audience that a particular candidate is the one they should vote for, there's nothing inherently cultlike about calling him "the one." Unless, of course, you consider campaign slogans like "Nixon's the One" evidence of a personality cult.

Next, there is Obama's declaration that "we are the ones we've been waiting for." The point, which he has made many times, is that voters should take responsibility themselves for enacting change, and thus that his supporters should not treat him as a savior. Obama-as-cult-leader screeds insist upon reading the meaning as the exact reverse. Conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer wrote, "in the words of his own slogan, 'we are the ones we've been waiting for,' which, translating the royal 'we,' means: 'I am the one we've been waiting for.'" As a pundit, I'm intrigued by this technique of taking a word out of your subject's statement and substituting its opposite. Did you know that McCain's slogan, "Country first," could be translated via the Krauthammer method into "Country last"? Why does John McCain hate America?

Finally, there's Obama's line, "This was the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal." McCain's campaign, and conservative pundits like Mark Steyn and Krauthammer (again), have mocked this as a claim to divine powers. "Moses made the waters recede, but he had help," sneered right-wing columnist Irwin Stelzer. Call me a literalist, but I think Obama was referring to his plan to curtail global warming, which is causing sea levels to rise at a rate of approximately three millimeters a year, rather than boasting supernatural dominion over the elements.

Now, it's certainly true that some enthusiastic Obama fans have displayed unusual zeal for their candidate. Yet it was only a few years ago—before President Bush's approval ratings tanked and conservatives decided that he wasn't actually a conservative at all—that the right had its own personality cult. There was *DC 9/11*, the Stalinist-style propaganda film reimagining Bush as an action hero boldly defying the terrorists on September 11. *National Review*, which has published innumerable articles in recent weeks decrying Obama's personality cult, was running advertisements for bronze busts depicting Bush in his "Mission Accomplished" fighter-pilot getup.

After September 11, James Merritt, then-president of the Southern Baptist Convention, told Bush that he had been chosen by God. Bush nodded. (Fred Barnes reported this encounter in *The Weekly Standard*, concluding, "The stage was set for Bush to be God's agent of wrath.") As *Time* reported, "Privately, Bush even talked of being chosen by the grace of God to lead at that moment." Claiming you've been chosen by God to lead the world in a titanic clash of good versus evil is pretty much the definition of messianic.

The short-lived cult of Bush, in fact, merely reprised the cult of Reagan that lives on to this day. Reagan kitsch has never gone out of style among Republicans. Numerous conservative pundits have suggested that any public policy question can be solved simply by asking "What would Reagan do?" The Heritage Foundation has a dedicated WWRD website. If, say, Brookings had inserted Obama's name into a phrase usually reserved for Jesus, you can only imagine what conservatives would make of it.

The hysteria about Obama's alleged messianism is, in part, a calculated response to his wild popularity with the Democratic base. McCain does not inspire strong loyalty among Republican partisans. (Indeed, a year ago, conservatives were still savaging him as a self-righteous poseur, and, while they've now discovered virtues in McCain that previously eluded them, it's too early to whip up full-blown Bush-style worship.) The cult accusation is a way of turning Obama's strengths—his rhetorical skills and intense support—into a weakness.

But it's not only a tactic. Conservatives appear genuinely freaked out about the intense loyalty Obama inspires. They're used to *their* side deeply believing in a presidential candidate. Seeing it happen to the other party is a novel and disconcerting experience. How long has it been since Democrats had genuine enthusiasm for their nominee? Nobody loved John Kerry. I found Al Gore inspiring, but not many others did. Democrats in 1992 were enthusiastic about their party recapturing the White House, but most realized that Clinton was kind of slick and untrustworthy. Jimmy Carter and George McGovern inspired a bit of enthusiasm in some quarters. But Michael Dukakis, Walter Mondale, Hubert Humphrey, and Lyndon Johnson were all acceptable, and often respected, but not loved.

The spectacle of millions of genuinely enthusiastic Democrats therefore rattles conservatives. And liberals, too—we don't like personality cults, which is why you never see any bronze busts of Clinton in anybody's den. The faith Obama inspires, though, isn't irrational. While unnervingly inexperienced, he's a first-class intellect and a first-class temperament. No, he's not the messiah. But why wait for the messiah to feel optimistic? ◆

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From Washington

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Speech!

Why political oratory sounds so weird.

If Abraham Lincoln were brought back to life, one thing that would throw him, other than electric power and the Internet, would be that audiences disrupted his speeches by clapping after every three or four lines. As ordinary as this seems now, this kind of applause is actually a custom of our times: Wesleyan political scientist Elvin Lim has documented that, in records of presidential addresses since Franklin D. Roosevelt, 97 percent of the applause lines appear in speeches by Richard Nixon and his successors. To speakers in Lincoln's day, a public address was typically a lecture. In our time, it is more often a love-in, more about the speaker "connecting" with the audience than teaching it anything new; hence the constant interruptions for clapping.

This campaign season has lent us more than one occasion to consider the difference between style and substance in speeches, with first Hillary Clinton and recently John McCain reminding voters that Barack Obama's rousing oratorical style cannot be equated with leadership ability. The point in itself is valid, and will be worth considering as we watch not only Obama but the other speakers at the Democratic and Republican conventions. Typical of such events in our times, the speeches will be heavier on sentiment than information, feel rather than content.

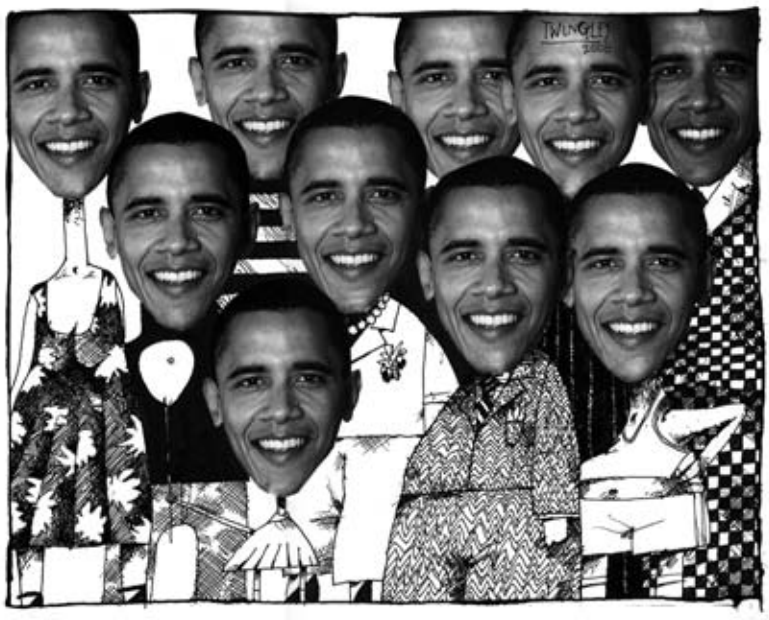
Given the standard assumption that our political culture would be better off if everyone would just "stick to the issues," the heavy performative streak in modern political speechmaking could be seen as counterintuitive. Wouldn't we expect the average person, when behind the podium, to simply talk? Why do so many find it natural to slide into a dramatic speaking style alien to their everyday selves when speaking to audiences—and why do they say so little when they do?

Oratorical drama is a cultural universal. Even in indigenous tribes, the kind of language used when speaking before large groups is different from casual speech. Among the Cuna of Panama, when a chief gives an address, he deliberately uses archaic grammar full of sounds and suffixes long obsolete in everyday speech. "God left behind wild boar strongholds" is *Pap yannu kalukan urpis* if you are saying it to a friend, but in a speech comes out festooned with antique bric-a-brac: *Pap*-a *yannu kalukan*-a *urpis*-aye—rather like Americans giving speeches in the English of Chaucer.

One purpose of this kind of artifice is holding the audience's attention. Human speech is fundamentally a social activity that occurs in the form of conversation. Sitting in silence listening to others talk at length is a secondary and learned activity—think of the noisy Elizabethan audiences at the Globe Theatre. The Cuna even assign a custodial figure to say "Don't sleep!" (*Kapita marye*!) at regular intervals during public addresses. In addition to using such blunt instruments, orators worldwide hold the floor through the novelty of vocabulary and grammar that is conspicuously formal.

Yet keeping an audience's attention does not inherently require leaving substance at the door as our modern speechmakers so often do. Travelling the country presenting his proposal for the League of Nations, Woodrow Wilson gave a long-lined and detailed argument of a kind that seemed ordinary in 1919

TWINGLEY'S WORLD



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but would seem as exotic today as someone shouting "Wake up!" every ten minutes at the Democratic Convention.

"I have perceived more and more that men have been busy creating an absolutely false impression of what the treaty of peace and the Covenant of the League of Nations contain and mean," Wilson said. He then provided a point-by-point refutation of his critics—for example, "You have heard a great deal—something that was true and a great deal that was false—about that provision of the treaty which hands over to Japan the rights which Germany enjoyed in the province of Shantung in China."

Today, it is hard to believe that these words were spoken rather than reposing between the covers of a book, because our tolerance for both substance and formality has eroded.

In his taxonomy of oratorical styles, Aristotle distinguished between *logos*, founded in argumentation, and *pathos*, founded in emotion. Wilson knew his *logos*; today's speeches mine the *pathos* vein. Sentences are on the short side, warmth or irony of intonation is as central to the message as phraseology, and the resonance of the single word or phrase is valued over the sentence or paragraph. In short, American oratory has become increasingly like casual speech over the past several decades; what was once a gulf between oratorical and casual speaking styles is today more of a crack.

The motivational value of these kinds of speeches is clear. At the 1992 Democratic Convention, Barbara Jordan exclaimed, "I remind you that [in] 1976, we won the Presidency. Why not repeat that performance in 1992? We can do it! We can do it! We can do it!" It doesn't look like much on paper, but it was irresistible in performance. It bears mentioning that Wilson's stodgier pitch in 1919 ended in failure.

Part of the difference between our era and earlier times is technology. Speakers in the early twentieth century and before had to get their message across in large spaces without microphones. (Microphones were just coming into use at the end of Wilson's career while he was touring; he used an early one in San Diego.) They were experienced by most from a distance, forced to speak precisely and use broad gestures. Today's speakers can use their natural voices, and, as often as not, their faces are shown on large screens as they speak. The old-style grandiloquence would seem affected and insincere.

★ ★ ★

The Conventions on TNR.com

OBSESSIVE COVERAGE AND INSIDER DOPE FROM THE FLOOR

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→ **Analysis from TNR Staff and Contributors: Jonathan Chait, John McWhorter, Alan Wolfe**

→ **All-Time Great Convention Stories: Hendrick Hertzberg, Stephen King, Michael Lewis**

A recording survives from the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor of congressmen arguing for a declaration of war. Born in the nineteenth century and raised in a pre-amplification culture, these men sound to us as if they are play-acting. Charles Eaton of New Jersey declaimed with a straight face: "Yesterday, against the roar of Japanese cannon in Hawaii, our American people heard a trumpet call; a call to unity; a call to courage; a call to determination once and for all to wipe off of the earth this accursed monster of tyranny and slavery, which is casting its black shadow over the hearts and homes of every land!"

It's no accident that, today, the only congressman who sounds anything like this is nonagenarian Robert Byrd. One succeeds now with a more casual speaking persona, and casual speech, as linguists have documented, is rendered not in long, tidy sentences but in packets of about seven words at a time. Hence "Yes, we can!" in place of disquisitions about Germany's doings in Shantung province.

Interestingly, modern speakers have discovered they can play down to their audiences without seeming to. The intonations of casual speech are a kind of music; and, when wielded effectively, they can satisfy in the same way as a good song. Steven Mithen at Reading University has even proposed that language began as strings of musical syllables, gradually reinterpreted as nouns and verbs. Thus, euphonious intonation has a way of sounding like grammar—i.e., logic. In fact, researchers at the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig have discovered that the part of the brain that processes musical sequences is the same one that generates grammatical syntax.

If our expectation that a subject will be followed by a predicate is founded in the same process that leads us to hear the sequence of notes of "Twinkle, twinkle, little star / How I wonder what you are" as a proper tune, it's no wonder Obama can get so much out of the sheer melody of his delivery. With our brains configured in a way that makes melody feel like logic, the only question would be why Obama's savory intonations would *not* suggest leadership ability to his fans. In fact, intonation has arguably been as key to Obama's success as his heritage or intelligence. One senses that the women fainting during his speeches are overcome more by the way he talks than what he is saying: With his mastery of cadence and vocal texture, he could rouse an audience reading from a phone book.

Yet the fact remains that speeches rooted more in slogan and song than explanation cannot help but seem lightweight compared to the kinds of speeches audiences once considered ordinary. "Where's the beef?" is the kind of question that may come to mind as we wait in vain for an address akin to Mario Cuomo's at the Democratic Convention in 1984, the year that slogan was popular. Even then, his "City on a Hill" oration seemed faintly antiquarian in its rhetorical density and precision.

However, we must be careful what we wish for. In our sound-bite culture, America not only does not, but perhaps cannot, process *logos*-based oratory the way it used to. Hillary Clinton's content-rich addresses during the primaries got her nowhere, and Obama's masterfully composed speech on race this spring left his detractors unmoved, many seemingly challenged in even following his lines of argument. For all the complaints from voters about Obama that they don't know "who he is," if he had stepped onto the national stage patiently explaining who he was, how many people would have even been able to listen?

John McWhorter

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ANTHONY RUSSO

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The Empiricist Strikes Back

Obama's pragmatism explained.

In the last few weeks, a number of people on the left have expressed disappointment with Barack Obama. Obama has said that the death penalty may be appropriate for child rape. He has applauded the Supreme Court's recognition of an individual right to own guns. He has voted for wiretapping reform that includes retroactive immunity for telephone companies. Having raised doubts about NAFTA during the primary, Obama recently said that he does not want to reopen negotiations unilaterally.

Perhaps because of Obama's strong and early opposition to the Iraq war, and because he has not been on the national scene long, some people on the left have projected their own views onto him. They think that his recent departures from left-wing orthodoxy are a form of flip-flopping or some kind of betrayal.

These objections miss the mark. Obama has not betrayed anyone. The real problem lies in the assumption, still widespread on both the left and the right, that Obama is a doctrinaire liberal whose positions can be deduced simply by asking what the left thinks.

Of course Obama is a progressive. From health care to assistance for low-income families to education to environmental protection, he emphasizes that Americans have duties to one another, and that government should be taking active steps to provide equal opportunity and to help those who need help. But, by nature, he is also an independent thinker, and he listens to all sides. One of his most distinctive features is that he is a minimalist, not in the sense that he always favors small steps (he doesn't), but because he prefers solutions that can be accepted by people with a wide variety of theoretical inclinations.

When he offers visionary approaches, he does so as a visionary minimalist—that is, as someone who attempts to accommodate, rather than to repudiate, the defining beliefs of most Americans. His reluctance to challenge people's deepest commitments might turn out to be what makes ambitious plans possible—notwithstanding the hopes of the far left and the cartoons of the far right.

Obama's views have never been simple to characterize. For a number of years, Obama has expressed his support for capital punishment. As a teacher of constitutional law, he does believe that the Second Amendment creates an individual right to have guns and said so well before the Supreme Court ruled to that effect. While he emphasizes the need for environmental and labor safeguards, Obama is no protectionist. He understands the power of markets, and, in principle, he is committed to free trade. Reiterating these long-held positions does not exactly count as flip-flopping or "tacking to the center."

No politician, and no human being, is fully consistent, and it is true that Obama's emphases have sometimes changed over time and that he has been willing to compromise. Having suggested that he would filibuster a measure granting the telecom companies retroactive immunity, Obama strongly favored a substitute bill that rejected such immunity. In the end, however, he was willing to vote for a bill with immunity. He did so on the grounds that it strengthens the authority of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (thus rejecting the Bush administration's most ambitious claims of inherent presidential authority)—while also specifically requiring (for the first time) judicial warrants for surveillance of Americans overseas and increasing protection against abuse in various ways, such

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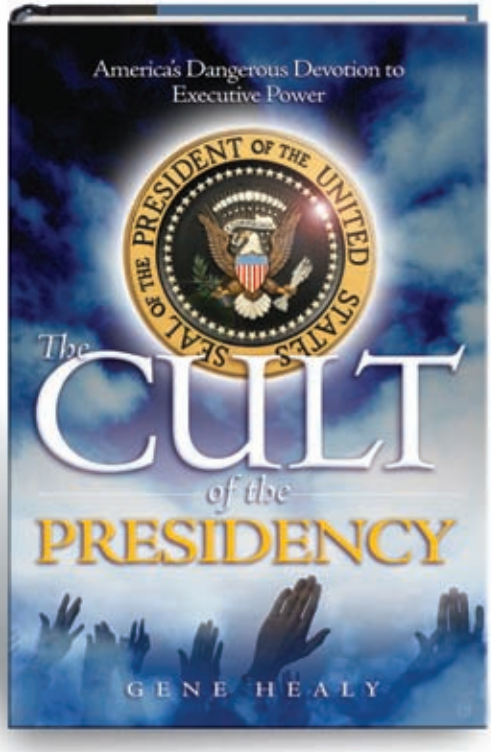
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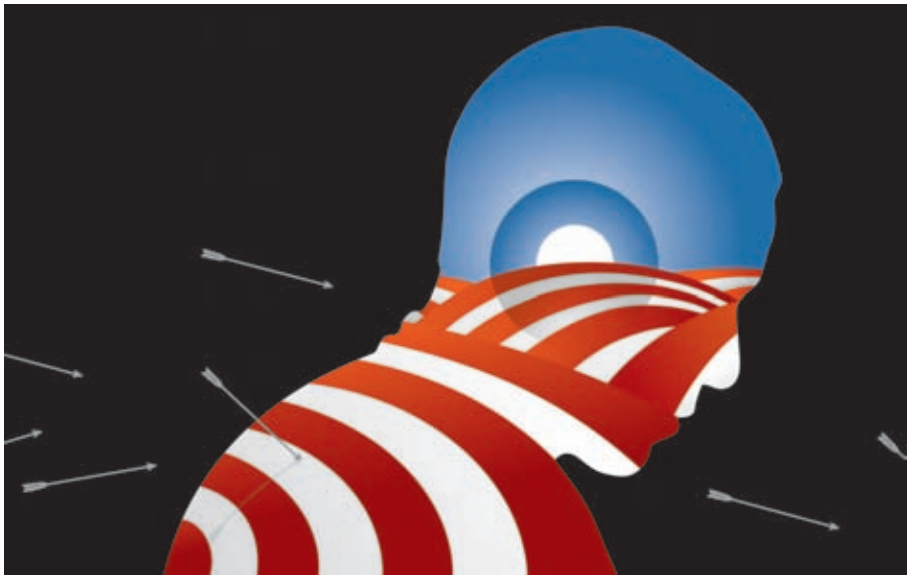
as by mandating reports by the inspectors general. To be sure, reasonable people rejected the compromise. But, in the end, even Morton Halperin, among the nation's strongest defenders of privacy, declared that the bill "provides important safeguards for civil liberties."

There is a much larger issue here, and it has to do with the distinctive nature of this particular candidate. Obama really means it when he deplores red-state-blue-state divisions and claims to draw ideas from Republicans as well as Democrats. Just as he resists ideological templates, Obama does not believe in "triangulation"; his skepticism about conventional ideological categories is principled, not strategic. It is revealing, and entirely characteristic, that Obama admires Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals*, in which Goodwin describes Lincoln's self-conscious decision to assemble a contentious, bipartisan cabinet. By nature, Obama does not follow old-line political orthodoxies. Above all, Obama's form of pragmatism is heavily empirical; he wants to know what will work.



Consider his domestic agenda. Favoring aggressive action to control greenhouse-gas emissions, he is open to considering nuclear power and has explicitly credited Republicans for promoting market-oriented approaches to environmental problems (and he has attracted the scorn of some on the left for doing so). A sharp critic of No Child Left Behind, he has spoken favorably about merit pay for teachers. Offering an ambitious health care plan, he would not require adults to purchase health insurance. His goal is to make health care available, not to force people to buy it—a judgment that reflects Obama's commitment to freedom of choice, his pragmatic nature (an enforcement question: Would those without health care be fined or jailed?), and his desire to produce a plan that might actually obtain a consensus. And, while he would raise taxes on the very richest Americans, he is hardly anti-business; indeed, he proposes to eliminate the capital gains tax for start-ups and small companies.

Many people on the left want Obama to be the anti-Bush. But what, exactly, does this mean? To some, it means a kind of left-wing Bushism—the mirror image of the Bush administration, with its rigidity, its insistence on enduring political divisions, and its ruthlessly Manichean approach to political life. If so, the left is likely to be disappointed. Obama wants politicians, including Democrats, to accept "the possibility that the other side might sometimes have a point." Obama does not demonize his opponents. For instance, he strongly favors the right to abortion, but he speaks respectfully and sympathetically of those who are pro-life. He does not like to attack people's motives. Speaking on what may be the most divisive issue of our time, he has often said that "there are patriots who opposed the war in Iraq and there are patriots who supported the war in Iraq."

But in his empiricism, his curiosity, his insistence on nuance, and his lack of dogmatism, Obama is indeed a sort of anti-Bush—and perhaps the best kind. If the Bush administration has often operated on the basis of the president's "instinct," we should expect to see, from Obama, a rigorously evidence-based government. If the Bush administration has rejected internal dissent and viewed disagreement as disloyalty, Obama is likely to seek advisers who will reflect diverse views and challenge his own inclinations. In the Senate, one of Obama's proudest accomplishments has been the Coburn-Obama Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, for which he worked closely with arch-conservative Tom Coburn to create an Internet database of federal spending.

The larger point is that Obama's departures from left-wing orthodoxy should not be understood as a betrayal of his own beliefs, or as a kind of "tacking to the center." Instead, they reflect something altogether different: an independence of mind, and a rejection of doctrinal filters, that we do not often see in candidates for public office.

CASS R. SUNSTEIN

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Falling Down

No manufacturing. No new ideas. What's our economy based on?

More than 75 years ago, confidence in the market economy got a rude shock as the world sank into the Great Depression. Adam Smith had said that the market led the economy, as if by an invisible hand, to economic efficiency and societal well-being. It was hard to believe that Smith was right when one in four Americans was out of a job. Some economists held true to their faith in self-regulating markets; they said, just be patient, in the long run the market's restorative forces will take hold, and we will recover. But Keynes's retort ruled the day: In the long run, we are all dead. We could not wait. Today, even conservatives believe that government should intervene to maintain the economy at or near full employment.

Those who believe in free markets have now received another rude shock: We have not yet sunk into an "official" recession, but it has been more than half a year since any new jobs were created, and, meanwhile, our labor force continues to grow. If the Great Depression undermined our confidence in *macroeconomics* (the ability to maintain full employment, price stability, and sustained growth), it is our confidence in *microeconomics* (the ability of markets and firms to allocate

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labor and capital efficiently) that is now being destroyed. Resources were misallocated and risks were mismanaged so severely that the private sector had to go running to the government for help, lest the entire system melt down. Even with federal intervention, I have estimated the cumulative gap between what our economy could have produced—had we invested in actual businesses, rather than, say, mortgages for people who couldn't afford their homes—and what we will produce over the period of our slowdown to be more than $1.5 trillion.

Blame has rightly fallen on the financial markets because it is their responsibility to allocate capital and manage risk, and their failure has revived several old concerns of the political (and economic) left. Some looking at the U.S. economy's decreasing reliance on manufacturing and increasing dependence on the service sector (including financial services) have long worried that the whole thing was a house of cards. After all, aren't "hard objects"—the food we eat, the houses we live in, the cars and airplanes that we use to transport us from one place to another, the gas and oil that provides heat and energy—the "core" of the economy? And if so, shouldn't they represent a larger fraction of our national output?

The simple answer is no. We live in a knowledge economy, an information economy, an innovation economy. Because of our ideas, we can have all the food we can possibly eat—and more than we should eat—with only 2 percent of the labor force employed in agriculture. Even with only 9 percent of our labor force in manufacturing, we remain the largest producer of manufactured goods. It is better to work *smart* than to work *hard*, and our investments in education and technology have enabled us to enjoy higher standards of living—and to live longer—than ever before. America's dominance in so many aspects of high-tech is testimony to the real returns to these soft expenditures. Indeed, I would argue that we would do even better if we had more resources in these sectors.

But the view that our recent success is based on a house of cards has more than a grain of truth to it. In recent years, financial markets created a giant rich man's casino, in which well-off players could take trillion dollar bets against each other. I am among those who believe that consenting adults should be allowed great freedom in what they do—as long as they don't harm others. But there's the rub. These high-rollers weren't just gambling their own money. They were gambling other people's money. They were putting at risk the entire financial system—indeed, our entire economic system. And now we are all paying the price.

Financial markets have been likened to the brain of the economy. They are supposed to allocate capital and manage risk. When they do their job well, economies prosper. When they do their job badly, as we are once again learning, everyone suffers. Financial markets are amply rewarded for their work—in recent years, they have received over 30 percent of corporate profits—and the standard mantra in economics was that these rewards were commensurate with their social return. That is, financial wizards might walk off with a great deal of money, but the rest of society is better off because our capital generates so much more productivity than in societies with less well-developed—and less rewarded—financial markets. Part of the rewards that accrue to financial markets are thus for encouraging innovation—through venture capital firms and the like.

But not all innovations enhance welfare, even when they increase profits. For instance, cigarette profits may have increased when the tobacco industry developed products that were more addictive, but those who died as a result, and their families, were hardly better off; nor were the taxpayers who had to pick up the tab for the increased health care costs. Food companies that, today, taking a page out of the same playbook, develop products that lead to compulsive eating—and the resulting obesity epidemic—may be increasing profits, but not societal well-being. Microsoft was ingenious in its strategies to leverage the monopoly power it had from controlling the PC operating system; it increased its profits, but, in killing rivals like Netscape, it had a chilling effect on innovation.

The task of unraveling all that went wrong in our financial system is a difficult one, but in essence the financial system's latest innovation was to devise fee structures that were often far from transparent and that allowed it to generate enormous profits—private rewards that were not commensurate with social benefits. The imperfections of information (resulting from the non-transparency) led to imperfections in competition, helping to explain why the usual maxim that competition drives profits to zero seemed not to hold. One should have suspected that something was wrong when bank after bank made so much money year after year. One should have suspected that something was wrong with the economic system when millions of Americans owed billions to credit card companies and banks in "late fees," "penalties," and a variety of other charges, transforming a high annual interest rate of 20 percent into a truly usurious effective interest rate of 100 percent or more for those who fell behind in their payments.

Perhaps the worst problems—like those in the subprime mortgage market—occurred when non-transparent fee structures interacted with incentives for excessive risk-taking in which financial managers got to keep high returns made one year, even if those returns were more than offset by losses the next. Behind the subprime crisis were mortgages designed to encourage repeated refinancing of homes—a pyramid scheme that generated billions of dollars in fees for the mortgage company as long as home prices continued to soar. It was inevitable that the bubble would break. But, by then, the profits that had been pocketed would make these financial wizards secure for life—or, at least, that was their hope.

To put it another way, had those in the financial sector allocated capital and risk in a way that fueled the economy, they would have had handsome profits. But they wanted more, and so established incentive structures that encouraged gambling. If they gambled and won, they could walk away with a share of the profits. If they gambled and lost, the investors would bear the consequences. It was almost as if the entire financial system was converted into a giant casino in which the system was rigged to guarantee those running the games huge returns, at the expense of the players. But in Las Vegas and Atlantic City, the games are near zero-sum: The gains of the casino owners approximately equal the losses of the players. The financial-system-as-casino, on the other hand, is a negative-sum game. Those on Wall Street may have walked off with billions, but those billions are dwarfed by the costs to be paid by the rest of us. Some have lost their homes and life savings—to say nothing of their dreams for their own futures and those of their children. Others are innocent bystanders who resisted the false promises of the mortgage brokers and the credit card companies, but now find themselves out of jobs as the economy weakens. And the poor are hurt as state revenues plummet, forcing cutbacks in public services.

The current woes in America's financial system are not an isolated accident—

ANTHONY RUSSO

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a rare, once-in-a-century event. Indeed, there have been more than one hundred financial crises worldwide in the last 30 years or so. Here in the United States alone, we have had the S&L crisis in 1989, the dot-com/WorldCom/Enron problems of the early years of this decade, and now the subprime-morphing-into-the-beyond-subprime collapse. In addition to these national problems, there were regional troubles—real-estate crises fed by excessive lending in Texas and the Southwest in the mid-'80s, and in California and New England in the early '90s. In each of these instances, financial markets failed to do what they were supposed to do in allocating capital and managing risk. In the late '90s, for instance, so much capital was allocated to fiber optics that, by the time of the crash, it was estimated that 97 percent of fiber optics had seen no light.

In short, the problem with the U.S. economy is not that we have allocated too many resources to the "soft" areas and too few to the "hard." It is not necessarily that we have allocated too many resources to the financial sector and rewarded it too generously—though a strong argument could be put forward to that effect. It is that too little effort was devoted to managing real risks that are important—enabling ordinary Americans to stay in their homes in the face of economic vicissitudes—and that too much effort went into creating financial products that enhanced risk. Too much energy has been spent trying to make an easy buck; too much effort has been devoted to increasing profits and not enough to increasing *real* wealth, whether that wealth comes from manufacturing or new ideas. We have learned a painful lesson, both in the 1930s and today: The invisible hand often seems invisible because it's not there. At best, it's more than a little palsied. At worst, the pursuit of self-interest—corporate greed—can lead to the kind of predicament confronting the country today.

JOSEPH STIGLITZ

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Open Tab

The dark art of the National Enquirer.

ON THE MORNING of February 21, David Perel, the editor-in-chief of the *National Enquirer*, was sitting in his Boca Raton office when he pulled up *The New York Times* website. Scanning the screen, he was surprised by one particularly opaque headline—FOR MCCAIN, SELF-CONFIDENCE ON ETHICS POSES ITS OWN RISK—that topped the *Times*' now infamous front-page investigation suggesting John McCain had carried on an affair with telecommunications lobbyist Vicki Iseman while he ran the Senate Commerce Committee during the 1990s.

Normally, in the pitched tabloid battle for exclusives, losing a competitive bombshell like the McCain scandal would send Perel into fits. Not this time. Five *Enquirer* reporters had spent more than a month in 2007 chasing down the same rumors but failed to uncover any documentary evidence. "I wouldn't have run that piece, there was nothing in it," Perel told me recently about the *Times* story, which received widespread criticism when it ran. "It was filled with innuendo. . . . When you're done reading it, you're like, there's no *there* there."

These days, you can't fault Perel for feeling smug. Just two weeks ago, John Edwards confirmed to Bob Woodruff of ABC News much of what the *Enquirer* had been reporting for 18 months: that he had cheated on his cancer-stricken wife Elizabeth with 44-year-old Rielle Hunter, who was paid $114,000 by Edwards's One America PAC for producing a series of "Webisodes" along the campaign trail. The paper had printed photos of a pregnant Hunter and named her as the mother of Edwards's love child. (Edwards denied fathering the baby.)

The *National Enquirer*, with its checkbook journalism and its focus on the salacious and the untoward, is hardly grist for journalism school classes. It has also gotten some stories spectacularly wrong, on August 1 settling a lawsuit for an undisclosed sum after it incorrectly reported in 2006 that Ted Kennedy had fathered a love child of his own. But the paper also has a remarkable record in driving the mainstream media's coverage of political figures, from Gary Hart and Donna Rice to Jesse Jackson's love child to the current Edwards gotcha, the product of a scrappiness and enterprise that even the *Times* should envy.

IN SEPTEMBER 2007, Rick Egusquiza, a bartender turned Hollywood reporter who joined the *Enquirer* in 2000, was sitting at his desk in the paper's Los Angeles bureau when he answered the tip line. ("I'm a nice guy, so people tell me things," Egusquiza says.) The anonymous source told him that Edwards was having an affair with Hunter. "I was like, 'Whoa, this is great,' " he recalled. "Not like this is *great*, but you know, like this is something I want to check out." The piece was assigned the next day, and Barry Levine, the *Enquirer*'s executive editor based in New York, directed the coverage that grew to include nearly a dozen reporters. "We saw some of the videos. It was clear back then, the flirtation was going on. Edwards was like a blushing kid to her," Egusquiza says.

After a month on the story, the *Enquirer* obtained e-mails from Hunter disclosing the affair. The first article was published on October 10, 2007, but it did not name Hunter. "We knew her name, but we withheld it," Perel says. "We were being conservative; sometimes we err on the side of caution."

In late November 2007, Perel and Levine dispatched to North Carolina a "ghost team," reporters whose job it is to watch but not to be seen. The reporters discovered that Hunter was living in a gated community and having dinner with Andrew Young, the campaign aide who later said he was the father of Hunter's child, and his wife. They wanted a photo, and they wanted comments from both Hunter and Young. "You know, you have sources telling you she's six months pregnant, but let's see it!" Perel says. "We decided to shift into 'go-mode.' "

For two weeks, a team of four reporters—including Alan Smith, who broke the Donna Rice scandal—staked out Hunter's OB/GYN office until she was spotted and snapped outside a nearby grocery store on December 12. "The picture you see where she looks like Camilla Parker Bowles took fifteen days," reporter Alan Butterfield, who was at the scene, remembers. "We sat in our car."

Before publishing the photograph on December 19, the *Enquirer* pressed Edwards to confirm the story, Perel says. Edwards's attorney offered to provide a sworn affidavit that his client hadn't fathered Hunter's child, but, according to two former Edwards staffers, Edwards never signed one. Perel says the paper also offered Edwards the chance to take a polygraph test; if he passed, Perel would kill the story. Edwards declined the offer.

Hunter's baby was born on February 27. Perel's reporters kept working the story.

ANTHONY RUSSO

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Four days before encountering Edwards at the Beverly Hilton on July 22, they learned he would be meeting Hunter at the hotel, and, on July 21, a team of seven *Enquirer* reporters reserved several rooms and set up camp. That day, Edwards arrived in California for an anti-poverty event. Sources told the reporters he would see Hunter during the visit, but they didn't know when. "We were up for thirty-six hours," says senior reporter Alexander Hitchen, a veteran of Fleet Street and son of Brian Hitchen, the former editor of the British *Sunday Express* tabloid.

Around 9:40 p.m. on July 21, Hitchen saw Hunter's friend Bob McGovern pull up to the hotel in a navy blue BMW 740 sedan and take the elevator up to Hunter's room. Hitchen and Butterfield knew Edwards would likely use a less visible entrance and stationed themselves in the lobby for the five-hour stakeout. Shortly after 2 a.m, Hitchen saw McGovern return to the lobby. Expecting Edwards to take the elevator to the basement where he could escape through a rear stairwell, the reporter positioned himself at the bottom of the stairs. Edwards popped out of the elevator and started up the stairs.

Then Hitchen pounced. "Mr. Edwards, Alexander Hitchen, from the *National Enquirer*. Would you like to say why you were at the hotel this evening to see your mistress Rielle Hunter and your love child?" he asked. Edwards froze and "turned pale," Hitchen remembers. Edwards made a move for the top of the stairs but Butterfield, standing with a photographer, was blocking the exit. "He ducked, tucked, and ran," Butterfield says. The *Enquirer* reporters ran after him, Hitchen asking questions all the while. "Do you think for the sake of your child, you should admit paternity?" he said. Edwards said nothing.

Edwards darted into a bathroom and pulled the door shut. Hitchen and Butterfield stood in the corridor, trying to pry it back open. Edwards "was trying to pull the door, and occasionally I'd see his face, and you'd see the stress on his face and his hair tussling around," Butterfield told me. A group of security guards came over. Hitchen explained the situation and handed his card to a guard who went into the bathroom. Soon, the guards shielded Edwards's head with a jacket and escorted him up the stairs and out of the hotel.

Hitchen and Butterfield stayed up for five more hours, hoping to encounter Hunter; but, after she failed to appear, the reporters filed their piece, which was posted online, and went to sleep.

In the days since the *Enquirer* broke the Edwards affair, the mainstream media has debated the probity of the tabloid's reporting, criticizing the paper for paying sources and for its seamy tactics, like staging stakeouts or digging through its subjects' garbage. "[T]abloids pay. And they pay big," former *New York Times* Hollywood reporter Sharon Waxman wrote critically on her blog on August 13. "I'd guess that Hunter sold the photo from an earlier meeting at the Beverly Hilton to the *National Enquirer*."

Perel laughed when I asked him about Waxman's theory. "Tell Sharon Waxman I wish Rielle was a source, because I would have nailed this story a long time ago. I would have been putting a sex tape on the Internet by now!" he said. He also says there's nothing corrupting about the way the paper pays for sources; it only pays out if the information is found to be true. "We pay for accurate information," Perel says. "We do it the way cops pay tipsters and informants."

And, with these sorts of stories, they go for the hard proof. Iain Calder, the *Enquirer*'s former editor-in-chief, estimates that the paper settled about a dozen cases during his 20-year tenure, which may not be as many as you'd expect given the paper's reputation, and the last time they lost a libel lawsuit was more than 30 years ago. (The *Enquirer*, in 1976, incorrectly reported that Carol Burnett had a fight with Henry Kissinger at a Washington, D.C., restaurant; Burnett said the *Enquirer* implied she was drunk.) "The *Enquirer* really tries to get it right," says David Kendall, an attorney who for 20 years served as the *Enquirer*'s legal counsel and who famously defended Bill Clinton during the Monica Lewinsky scandal. "It's subject to the same libel laws everybody else is."

Edwards allies, of course, are not so sure. "It would be a terrible side-effect of this whole situation," says Jonathan Prince, Edwards's former deputy campaign manager, "if people would see it as an endorsement of the *National Enquirer*'s tactics or credibility." Perel sees vindication in the mainstream media's late arrival to the Edwards story. "The two papers who look ridiculous are *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, that banned people from blogging about it" before Edwards admitted to the affair, he says. But the mainstream media knows that presidential candidates are fair game for celebrity tabloids. And the *Enquirer* will be trying to drive some of that coverage in the months ahead. The *Enquirer*'s reporters are already out there, digging, hustling, and working their sources. "We are definitely looking into Obama. We hear a lot of tips. I can't tell you how many things we hear all the time," Perel says. And, while the *Enquirer* has remained silent on the McCain-Iseman connection, Perel hasn't killed the story for good. "Let's just put it this way, I don't think it's dead," he says. "It doesn't mean it's right, but I don't think it's dead."

Gabriel Sherman

David Cowles

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Photographs by Brooks Kraft

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Swift Return

The strange resurrection of John Kerry.

JASON ZENGERLE

In early January, two days after Barack Obama lost the New Hampshire primary to Hillary Clinton, John Kerry appeared at Obama's side at a rally in Charleston, South Carolina, and gave the Illinois senator his endorsement. "Sometimes, the hardest thing for the established political world to do is make a clean break with the past," Kerry said. "The old guard sometimes has a hard time acknowledging an individual who breaks the mold. But let me tell you something: Barack Obama isn't going to just break the mold. Together, we are going to shatter it into a million pieces and rebuild our nation."

Kerry's endorsement came at a critical moment for Obama. Not only did it help him knock some of the "Clinton Comeback" stories out of the news cycle; an endorsement from the party's most recent presidential nominee signaled to other establishment Democrats—many of whom were still wary of crossing the Clintons—that they, too, could jump on the Obama bandwagon. At the lowest point of Obama's presidential campaign, Kerry had given him a much-needed boost.

What was most remarkable about Kerry's endorsement, however, was not the endorsement itself but the run-up to it. After being courted by Obama and Clinton for nearly a year, Kerry finally decided, a few days after Christmas, to offer his endorsement to Obama. But Obama did not want it—at least, not at that moment. The Obama campaign (rightly, as it turned out) believed that it was already on its way to winning the Iowa caucus on January 3; it also (wrongly) believed that it would win the New Hampshire primary five days later. As Kerry later recalled for me, "We just agreed that . . . we should let it have its own energy, not change that dynamic, and sort of hold it until it might be needed." And so, just before midnight on January 8, hours after getting pole-axed by Clinton in New Hampshire, Obama placed a call to Kerry to say he needed that endorsement now—that is, if Kerry was still willing to give it.

It's a general rule in politics that you don't keep endorsements in your back pocket, lest circumstances—and offers—change. In the case of an endorsement from Kerry, that rule would seem particularly apt. (A senior Clinton adviser says that, had Kerry offered Hillary his endorsement in late December, she would have announced it immediately; her campaign coveted Kerry's organized support in Iowa and New Hampshire, both of which he won in 2004.) Fair or not, Kerry has been dogged by a reputation for flip-flopping since even before the Bush campaign made it a central line of attack in his presidential run. For years, Democrats and pundits have complained that he lacks political backbone and that he can't be counted on when the chips are down. And, as Kerry himself realized, the chips were definitely down for Obama after New Hampshire. "The Hillary people, they were convinced that it was over—they'd punctured the balloon and it was done," Kerry says. "They'd won the big one, . . . and they were going to win the rest of the states."

Given all this, any politician in Kerry's shoes that night might have been forgiven for telling Obama that he'd had some second thoughts, that (to borrow a phrase) he was for the endorsement before he was against it. But when Obama called, Kerry was ready with his answer. "Barack said, 'Do you still want to go down to South Carolina?' " Kerry recalls. "I said, 'Absolutely, let's go.' "

Since making his gutsy decision to endorse, Kerry has emerged as a powerful surrogate for Obama, regularly going to bat for him on the stump and on the TV talk shows, where he hews closely to the Obama campaign's talking points and offers criticism of John McCain that's far more withering than anything Obama himself could get away with. "John McCain is still stuck on the low-road express," Kerry said at a recent campaign event. "He doesn't get it. He's even dangerous, I think, for the direction of this country."

For those who remember Kerry as a lackluster and ham-fisted presidential candidate, this emergence has come as a surprise. "There's a wholeheartedness to [Kerry speaking about Obama] and a total lack of hesitancy and calculation that he always seems to have when he's speaking about himself," says one Democratic consultant. "A year ago, if you had asked [Obama strategists] David Axelrod and David Plouffe if they thought Kerry would be an important surrogate, they'd have laughed. But he's been fucking good." Kerry is even winning compliments from across the aisle. "If Kerry had conducted himself like this four years ago," says Republican strategist John Weaver, "he might have been elected president."

Indeed, Obama's "clean break" from the national past, as Kerry called it in his endorsement speech, seems to be a clean break for Kerry as well. Which is yet another surprise. Given the abuse Kerry took from his party following his defeat, one might have expected him this time around to sit on the sidelines and sulk. Instead he's done the opposite, looking to Obama as a vehicle for his own rehabilitation. Which leads to the question: In trying to help Obama overcome Clinton and now McCain, will John Kerry at long last be able to overcome himself?

"I think we ran a great campaign in many ways that many people don't understand," Kerry told me when we met for breakfast at the Four Seasons in Boston one recent morning. At 64, Kerry might be slightly more wrinkled and gray than he was as a presidential candidate, but, other than his diminished entourage—he was accompanied by only a press aide and a driver—he doesn't look very different from four years ago. As he awkwardly folded his large frame into a cramped banquette and ordered an English muffin—"really well-cooked, like not quite cancerous"—it was hard not to think, *But for 60,000 votes in Ohio, this man would be eating breakfast in the White House right now*.

The thought almost certainly occurs to Kerry from time to time, too. Even now, he speaks of his presidential campaign in the sort of granular detail that suggests he hasn't really gotten over it. "I won eight million more votes than Al Gore, I won a record level of young people voting in history, I won more votes than any Democrat's ever won," he said in between bites of his scorched English muffin. He touted his victories

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in states that were thought to be tossups and his margins of victory in others that were considered safely Democratic. "In Washington, I ran five hundred thousand votes ahead of the governor," he boasted. Even states he failed to win were part of his case for how well he'd performed. "We had to stop advertising in Colorado [due to federal spending rules], I got pummeled for three weeks without any answers," he said, "and I still only lost by two-and-a-half—*two-point-four*—percentage points." Nearly four years later, that tenth of a percentage point obviously still matters to him.

"He was clearly haunted by the would-have-beens and what he might have done wrong," says Ed Kilgore, a Kerry adviser before and after the 2004 elections. "You could really see him for a while there assessing every single day's news in terms of what he would have done as president." In fact, some of Kerry's supporters now argue that, had he run in the current political climate, he would have won. "My feeling has always been that the mountain John Kerry had to climb was a hell of a lot bigger than the mountain Barack Obama has to climb," says David Thorne, Kerry's closest friend. Kerry himself isn't shy on that point. "On Election Day [in 2004], George Bush was at fifty percent; today he's at twenty-one or something," he said. "On Election Day, the right-way wrong-way numbers were forty-seven percent wrong way; today, it's eighty-five percent. On Election Day, the economy was pretty strong; today it's horrible. And, on Election Day, we were one year into a war; now we're six years into a war. So big shift in perceptions, energy prices, inflation, banking, foreclosures, just a totally different playing field. … Which is another reason why I'm proud of what we did."

But no amount of pride could make up for losing an election that many Democrats felt was theirs to win. And, after his defeat, Kerry set out to redeem himself. Almost immediately upon his return to the Senate, he took the lead on children's health care legislation and began speaking out on Iraq in more forceful terms than he'd ever used during the presidential campaign, sponsoring the first Senate bill to set a timetable for withdrawal. He wrote a book on the environment with his wife, Teresa, that became a best-seller. And he threw himself into the '06 midterms. "I raised fourteen million dollars … and I campaigned for eighty candidates, sixty of whom won," he boasts.

"He didn't go off and grow a beard and get fat like Al Gore," says one Kerry adviser. "He wanted to be frenetically active. I think he had the psychological need for and enjoyed doing a thousand things at once the minute that campaign was over."

Of course, the other big reason Kerry was so frenetically active after '04 was his ambition to run for president again in '08. "I think Gore decided almost from the outset that he wasn't going to run again," says Bob Shrum, who managed both Gore's and Kerry's presidential campaigns. "I think Kerry was seriously thinking about running."

But Kerry's personal rehabilitation and his presidential ambitions ran off the rails just a few days before the midterm elections, when, during a campaign rally in California, he botched a joke that was meant to skewer Bush for being a poor student but instead denigrated the intelligence of American soldiers in Iraq; suddenly, some of the midterm candidates he'd raised money and stumped for were canceling their appearances with him, and prominent Democrats, including Hillary Clinton, were denouncing him. "After that," says Shrum, "he couldn't run." Two months later, in a tearful speech to a mostly empty Senate chamber, Kerry announced, "I've concluded that this isn't the time for me to mount a presidential campaign."

That Kerry would wind up so heavily invested in Obama's presidential campaign might seem odd. After all, at first glance, the aging, bumbling Brahmin and the young, dashing African American couldn't be more different. But Kerry's friends are quick to emphasize the two men's similarities, from the time they spent abroad as children (albeit Kerry's in a Swiss boarding school) to the humbling electoral defeats both suffered early in their careers. "One thing that did connect Kerry and Obama was the sense that they had both kind of been outsiders a little bit in their lives," says a Kerry friend. "I think he looked at Obama as someone he could much more relate to than some of the other people in the campaign." As Kerry told me, "I see the affinity for change and grassroots politics that appeals to me. I came out of grassroots movement politics. I think there are similar instincts in a lot of things."

Indeed, for Kerry, Obama seems to embody the very qualities that he sees in himself but has been tragically unable to convey: that he is an agent for change, a crusader for justice, a politician in touch with the grassroots. "The Obama of this campaign," says one Kerry friend, "is the guy [Kerry] always wanted to be."

Even if Kerry didn't have a crush on Obama, he has other reasons for working so hard to elect him. One of them, it appears, is to end the vicious cycle of past Democratic presidential nominees screwing up current ones—a cycle with which he became intimately familiar in 2004. "He went through the contortions of being a nominee and having some high-profile headaches in previous nominees," says a Kerry adviser. Gore endorsed Howard Dean in the Democratic primaries and, after Kerry won the nomination, according to one Kerry adviser, wasn't as helpful as the Kerry campaign would have liked. "Gore had moved on to a different part of his life: Scheduling him was difficult, getting him to do things was a challenge," says the adviser. Meanwhile, many people in Kerry's circle believe Bill Clinton actually wanted to undermine Kerry. "If John had a conversation with President Clinton," the adviser says, "it was immediately leaked to *The New York Times*." Now, much like Jimmy Carter has tried to make up for a failed presidency by attempting to become the best ex-president, Kerry appears intent on trying to make up for his failed presidential campaign by attempt-

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ing to become the best ex–presidential nominee. "His sense is that the way he can be most helpful is doing everything he's asked and keeping his advice confidential," says the adviser.

Then there is the not insignificant matter of Obama's Republican opponent, whom Kerry seems to especially delight in skewering. Sometimes Kerry's criticism of McCain is snarky. "John McCain is looking for someone for vice president who has more economic expertise than he does," Kerry told 850 people at a recent birthday fund-raiser for Obama in Boston. "So congratulations to all of you, you're on the short list." Other times, his attacks are vicious—particularly when they relate to foreign policy. "Barack Obama hasn't been there as long, but, in the short time he has been there, he's shown a greater understanding of that challenge than John McCain has at any time in his long career," Kerry told me.

Kerry and McCain have a famously complex relationship. In 1984, when McCain was an Arizona representative, he traveled to Massachusetts to campaign against Kerry in his first run for the Senate because he was still angry at Kerry for throwing his Vietnam service medals on the steps of the Capitol in 1971—an action McCain heard about while being held in a North Vietnamese prison. But, in the '90s, through their work together on a Senate select committee that explored the Vietnam POW/MIA issue, Kerry and McCain became close friends. In 1996, when Kerry faced a tough reelection race against Bill Weld, McCain refused to campaign for Weld. And, in 2004, Kerry approached McCain about being his running mate. But, when McCain said no, and news of Kerry's interest wound up in the press, Kerry felt betrayed. "The inability to get together on the veep thing was not a problem," says one Kerry adviser. "The fact that the McCain folks decided to leak it all was." (Weaver, who was McCain's chief strategist at the time, denies that charge and believes the leak came from Democrats opposed to McCain's joining the ticket.) Things went further down hill when McCain, after initially denouncing the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth ads against Kerry as "dishonest" and "dishonorable," refused to let Kerry use his image in rebuttal ads and then went on to vigorously campaign for Bush. "Kerry really believed that Band of Brothers bullshit," says one Democratic strategist. "He thought that he and McCain had come to a soulful understanding of each other that was strong and permanent and meaningful, and it clearly wasn't for McCain."

Kerry insists that his disagreements with McCain aren't personal. But he seems personally wounded by the political road McCain has been traveling of late. "I'm not unfriendly to John," Kerry told me in a resigned tone. "I do think he's taken a turn that I don't find in keeping with John McCain, the maverick, independent pre-2004. … I think he's been catering to interests that have led us astray the last few years." Kerry's brother, Cam, says, "The sort of general public disappointment in McCain"—at least among Democrats who once admired him—"translates on a personal level for John." Kerry recalled a breakfast he and McCain had in early 2005 at the Capitol Hill restaurant La Colline, where the two talked over the presidential campaign. He said McCain told him, "Sometimes you disappoint your friends."

When Kerry's not campaigning for Obama, he's campaigning for himself. He's up for reelection in November, and, although he faces only token opposition, he's not taking anything for granted. One afternoon in early August, he came to an Irish bar in Quincy, where about 50 people were gathered in a basement banquet room. As is usually the case with Kerry, his prepared remarks were fine, hitting all the hot-button issues from the subprime mortgage crisis to McCain's foreign policy of "unilateralism on steroids." But it's the off-the-cuff speaking that has always bedeviled Kerry, and, when he took his first question, about withdrawing troops from Iraq, and immediately launched into a story about a meeting he once had with the governor of Anbar Province and some local sheiks, it triggered an instant flashback to any number of rambling, incomprehensible presentations—the kind that once led Jon Stewart to admonish Kerry, "No one understands you!" But then something unexpected happened: Kerry quickly got to his point. "I said to them point blank, 'Look, as long as the president keeps saying we're going to be here as long as it takes, isn't it true that you really are under no pressure whatsoever to make the decision about how long you take?' And they agreed. … They said, 'You're right.'" And then it was on to the next question. Without the apparent performance anxiety of running for president, Kerry had suddenly discovered concision.

Indeed, some people now believe that this new and improved Kerry is headed for bigger things. In the weeks before the Democratic convention, Kerry's name was increasingly bandied about as a potential Obama running-mate. ("[I]f he had not run in '04, he would almost be a lock for the vice-presidential nomination," Shrum told *The Huffington Post*.) And there's speculation that, in the event of an Obama victory, Kerry would join his cabinet. "John Kerry would be a tremendous asset to the Obama administration as secretary of State," says Max Cleland, a former Georgia senator and Kerry confidante.

Kerry and his advisers are quick to tamp down such talk. This, to be sure, is the natural denial of a politician up for reelection. But it also appears that Kerry, who has seemingly been running for a higher office since he was an undergrad at Yale, has finally achieved an angle of repose. He speaks enthusiastically about the "progressive legislating" on issues like stem-cell research and children's health care that will be possible if Obama wins and Democrats pick up seats. "Then you start building, and then you do the toughies like energy and health care," he says. "I think we could really see a very exciting period." His aides say that he hopes to one day chair the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the same committee he testified before as a 27-year-old antiwar activist. And, although it is a sensitive topic, given his friendship with Ted Kennedy, the prospect of Kerry eventually becoming Massachusetts's senior senator and an elder statesman of sorts is obviously an appealing one. The fact that these goals only require Kerry to hang around long enough to achieve them suggests a certain level of contentment, in stark contrast to the restless ambition he has always displayed. "I think he's decided that he wants to be a senator," says one Kerry adviser, "and there have been questions about that over the years."

Over breakfast at the Four Seasons, Kerry talked about some of the political lessons he learned in 2004—that it was a mistake to take public financing and also a mistake not to fight back harder against the Swift Boat ads—and how they applied to Obama and the 2008 race. But, the more Kerry talked, the less he reflected on Obama and the more he focused on himself. "I'm a much better political thinker, I am a much better candidate, I am a much better public person than I was when I began," he said. "And I think a lot of the stereotypes of John Kerry, some of which I got tagged with, I understand them, I think many of them, most of them, are way behind me in terms of reality. I think I'm a much stronger advocate, much clearer in my language and in my beliefs, knowing what matters and doesn't, and I think I would have been …" Kerry paused in mid-sentence. "I *could be*," he continued, "very strong." ◆

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Creation Myth

What Barack Obama won't tell you about his community organizing past.

JOHN B. JUDIS

In late October 1987, Barack Obama and Jerry Kellman took a weekend off from their jobs as community organizers in Chicago and traveled to a conference on social justice and the black church at Harvard. During an evening break in the schedule, they strolled around campus in their shirtsleeves, enjoying the unseasonably warm weather. Two-and-a-half years earlier, Kellman had hired Obama to organize residents of Chicago's South Side. Now, Obama had something to tell his friend and mentor.

It had to do, in part, with his father. At the time, Obama had just learned from his African half-sister what had happened to Barack Obama Sr., who abandoned him when he was two years old. After receiving his master's degree in economics from Harvard, the elder Obama had returned to Kenya, where he became a high-ranking government official. But, when he criticized Kenya's increasingly corrupt and authoritarian government, he lost his job and had to live from hand to mouth, depending on the goodwill of relatives while drinking heavily. Obama told Kellman that he feared ending up destitute and unhappy like his dad. "He wanted to marry and have children, and to have a stable income," Kellman recalls.

But Obama was also worried about something else. He told Kellman that he feared community organizing would never allow him "to make major changes in poverty or discrimination." To do that, he said, "you either had to be an elected official or be influential with elected officials." In other words, Obama believed that his chosen profession was getting him nowhere, or at least not far enough. Personally, he might end up like his father; politically, he would fail to improve the lot of those he was trying to help.

And so, Obama told Kellman, he had decided to leave community organizing and go to law school. Kellman, who was already thinking of leaving organizing himself, found no reason to argue with him. "Organizing," Kellman tells me, as we sit in a Chicago restaurant down the street from the Catholic church where he now works as a lay minister, "is always a lost cause." Obama, circa late 1987, might or might not have put it quite that strongly. But he had clearly developed serious doubts about the career he was pursuing.

Yet, two decades later, to hear Obama the presidential candidate tell it, those years in Chicago as a community organizer shaped the person—and the politician—he has become.

John Euland

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Campaigning in Iowa last year, he declared that community organizing was "the best education I ever had, better than anything I got at Harvard Law School." In a video this spring, Obama stated that community organizing is "something I carry with me when I think about politics today—obviously at a different level and in a different place, but the same principles still apply." "Barack is not a politician first and foremost," Michelle Obama has said. "He's a community activist exploring the viability of politics to make change."

Certainly, Obama has good reason to tout his community organizing experience. After graduating from an Ivy League college, Obama passed up more lucrative jobs to devote three years to organizing low-income African Americans in Chicago. That choice tells us something about his values, and his pride in it is understandable.

But his campaign has taken the point a step further, implying that Obama the politician is a direct descendant of Obama the organizer—that he has carried the practices and principles of community organizing into his campaign, and would carry them into the White House as well. This is the version of Obama's biography that most journalists have accepted.

In truth, however, if you examine carefully how Obama conducted himself as an organizer and how he has conducted himself as a politician, if you consider what he said about organizing to his fellow organizers, and if you look at the reasons he gave friends and colleagues for abandoning organizing, then a very different picture emerges: that of a disillusioned activist who fashioned his political identity not as an extension of community organizing but as a wholesale rejection of it. Indeed, the most important thing to know about Barack Obama's time as a community organizer in Chicago may not be what he gained from the experience—but rather why, in late 1987, he decided to quit.

Obama arrived in South Chicago in 1985 to find a bleak scene. Roseland and the northern edge of Riverdale, the neighborhoods to which he was assigned, had been decimated by the collapse of the steel industry. In *Dreams from My Father*, Obama wrote of "the boarded-up homes, the decaying storefronts, the aging church rolls, [and the] kids from unknown families who swaggered down the streets." Most middle-class whites had moved out, and, while the area was home to a few middle-class blacks, "[t]he stores and banks had left with their white customers, causing main thoroughfares to decompose." Many of the area's residents lived in the 2,000-unit Altgeld Gardens, public housing that was bounded by the fetid Calumet River, an expressway, and a sewage treatment plant that emitted, Obama wrote, a "heavy, putrid odor."

The election in 1983 of Chicago's first black mayor, Harold Washington, had given blacks in South Chicago "a new idea of themselves," Obama observed. Yet the mayor's efforts to revive the city's worst neighborhoods were stymied by the conservative white majority on the city council.

Obama had moved to Chicago to work for Kellman, a transplanted New Yorker eleven years his senior, and his partner, Mike Kruglik. The pair was trying to build a regional community organization that spanned South Chicago, Chicago's southern suburbs, and Northwest Indiana. Kellman and Kruglik wanted their new recruit to establish a branch centered in Roseland. It was to be called the Developing Communities Project.

Obama had worked briefly as an organizer in Harlem, but, in Chicago, he learned the principles of community organizing from Kellman, Kruglik, and other disciples of Saul Alinsky, a hard-scrabble, profane Chicagoan who, in the late 1930s, had organized white ethnic meatpacking workers in the area around the old Chicago Stockyards. Alinsky was heavily influenced by John L. Lewis, the president of the United Mine Workers and founder of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). He wanted to do for working-class communities what Lewis and the CIO had done for workplaces: unite people of different backgrounds around common goals and use their collective strength to wring concessions from the powers that be.

Alinsky had died in 1972, but not before achieving considerable success in Chicago and other cities. And, while some of his opinions—like his derogation of Martin Luther King's abilities as an organizer—were not shared by Kellman and other followers, his general principles would guide groups like the Gamaliel Foundation, which trained people who went on to work for the Developing Communities Project and similar organizations. They became the underpinning of Obama's approach. "His assignment was to operate in the classic style," Kruglik, a stubby, scruffy, intense man who now works for Gamaliel, tells me.

These rules can be reduced, more or less, to a few central ideas. Alinsky believed that humans respond to their own self-interest rather than conscience or morality. (People are "moved primarily by perceived immediate self-interests," he argued, while morality is a "rhetorical rationale for expedient action and self-interest.") As a result, the job of an organizer is to discover what citizens think is in their self-interest and then help them fight for it. Alinsky also instructed that the organizer himself should not become a public leader, but should operate behind the scenes to encourage "natural" or "native" leaders among the people he is organizing. That is, the goal of an organizer is *never* to create a movement based on his own charisma. ("We're trying to build an organization with staying power, not a movement based on instant power and charisma," Ernesto Cortes Jr., a prominent Alinsky disciple, explained in 1988.) Finally, Alinsky felt that organizers should draw a clear line between their work and the political world. An organization should forge "no permanent political ties," declared a guide put out by the Industrial Areas Foundation, which Alinsky created. When I asked former community organizer John Kretzmann—who teaches at Northwestern and writes about organizing—whether organizers saw all politicians as "whores," he replied, "Even if you found one that wasn't, it makes no sense to get close to them."

Obama attempted to put these principles into practice in South Chicago. Kellman and Kruglik's initial objective was to revive the region's manufacturing base—and preserve what remained of its steel industry—by working with unions and church groups to pressure companies and the city; but those hopes were quickly dashed. Indeed, during his three years in South Chicago, Obama was constantly having to scale back his objectives as one project after another faltered. First, he got community members to demand a job center that would provide job referrals, but there were few jobs to distribute. Then, he tried to create what he called a "second-level consumer economy" in Roseland consisting of shops, restaurants, and theaters. This, too, went nowhere. At that point, Kellman advised Obama to move elsewhere. "Stay here, and you are bound to fail," he told him.

But Obama remained. Next, he began to focus on providing social services for Altgeld Gardens. "We didn't yet have the power to change state welfare policy, or create local jobs, or bring substantially more money into the schools," he wrote. "But what we could do was begin to improve basic services at Altgeld—get the toilets fixed, the heaters working, the windows repaired." Obama helped the residents wage a successful campaign

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to get the Chicago Housing Authority to promise to remove asbestos from the units; but, after an initial burst of activity, the city failed to keep its promise. (As of last year, some residences still had not been cleared of asbestos.) In waging these campaigns, Obama's organization added staff, gained adherents, and won church support, including from the congregation of Reverend Jeremiah Wright. But it failed to stem the area's overall decline. "Ain't nothing gonna change, Mr. Obama," says one resident quoted in *Dreams from My Father* who grows disillusioned with the Developing Communities Project. "We just gonna concentrate on saving our money so we can move outta here as fast as we can."

Publicly, however, Obama did not appear discouraged. He continued to train other organizers for the Gamaliel Foundation. "It was the same traditional organizing leadership training," recalls Obama trainee David Kindler. Obama also put the best face on what he was doing. Sometime before he left Chicago, he wrote an article for a magazine called *Illinois Issues* that would eventually appear in an anthology titled *After Alinsky: Community Organizing in Illinois*. In the article, he insisted that his project had achieved "impressive results" in South Chicago. While acknowledging that the "exodus from the inner city of financial resources, institutions, role models and jobs" posed difficulties for organizers, he insisted that "none of these problems is insurmountable."

Reflecting organizers' general attitude toward politicians, he downplayed the importance of Mayor Washington. "The election of Harold Washington in Chicago or of Richard Hatcher in Gary were not enough to bring jobs to inner-city neighborhoods or cut a 50 percent dropout rate in the schools, although they did achieve an important symbolic effect," he wrote. "In fact, much-needed black achievement in prominent city positions has put us in the awkward position of administering underfunded systems neither equipped nor eager to address the needs of the urban poor and being forced to compromise their interests to more powerful demands from other sectors." To be successful, Obama argued, the efforts of politicians had to be "undergirded by a systematic approach to community organization." Obama also criticized the role of charismatic leadership, writing that "a viable organization can only be achieved if a broadly based indigenous leadership—and not one or two charismatic leaders—can knit together the diverse interests of their local institutions."

Yet there is considerable evidence that, even as he was writing these words, Obama was having doubts about community organizing. By the early fall of 1987—a little more than two years after he had come to Chicago—Obama had decided to apply to Harvard Law School. At some point thereafter, he began to explain his decision to friends and colleagues. The most revealing of these discussions are not reported in *Dreams from My Father*.

It was not just the walk he took with Kellman through Harvard's campus. Obama also talked to Kruglik about his reasons for leaving Chicago. In their conversations, he described politics—and winning political office—as the most important step toward achieving change. And, instead of seeing Harold Washington as buffeted by forces beyond his control, he now aspired to *be* Washington. "He was fascinated by Mayor Washington," says Kruglik. "Harold Washington inspired him to think about becoming a politician." Kruglik says that Obama wanted to follow in the mayor's footsteps: Washington had gone to law school, later becoming a state senator, then a congressman, and finally Chicago's mayor. "He told me that he was thinking of running for mayor some day," Kruglik says.

Obama also talked to Northwestern professor John McKnight, a former community organizer who is a member of the Gamaliel Foundation's board of directors and had helped to train Obama. He asked McKnight for a law school recommendation and told him that he eventually wanted to go into politics. McKnight warned him that politics, unlike community organizing, would inevitably require compromising his values and ideals. "The average legislator is surrounded by competing interests," McKnight told him. "Most of the time what they are doing is trying to balance interests." Obama, however, was not to be dissuaded. Recalls McKnight, "At the time, neighborhood organizing was very parochial. … He could see that the impact wouldn't reach beyond the neighborhood. The change he was seeking was bigger."

But it wasn't simply that Obama dreamed of pursuing change on a grander scale. By late 1987, he seems to have grown disillusioned with the underlying principles of community organizing. In September 1989, the editors of *Illinois Issues* organized a symposium featuring, among others, the contributors to *After Alinsky*. It took place around a circular table in a conference room at the Woods Charitable Fund (a backer of the Gamaliel Foundation) in downtown Chicago. Kretzmann was the moderator, and participants included political scientist Paul Green, author Ben Joravsky, and Obama, who was then entering his second year of law school.

Joravsky kicked off the discussion by recounting Alinsky's core principles. Green then brought up a controversial organization, Save our Neighborhoods/Save our City (SON/SOC), that had launched in February 1984 in response to fears that Harold Washington would promote public housing in certain white neighborhoods—leading to an influx of black residents. As Green noted, SON/SOC was organized by Alinsky disciples who were following their mentor's principle of basing demands on self-interest.

Green insisted that there was an anti-establishment core to SON/SOC's agenda. "Here are a bunch of blue-collar people … working to help their neighborhood," he said. He also pointed out that the group had carefully directed its ire against unscrupulous realtors rather than blacks and had tried to reach an accommodation with Mayor Washington. Joravsky responded by criticizing SON/SOC for using racial appeals to build its organization. As others joined and the argument threatened to grow heated, Kretzmann called on Obama to discuss organizing in low-income black communities. But Obama had been provoked by the discussion of SON/SOC. And, a year removed from South Chicago, he wanted to say something about community organizing in general.

Obama—sporting a white shirt, tie, and incipient Afro—was clearly troubled by the example of SON/SOC, which suggested that an organization, acting on Alinsky's principles, could become racist. (Indeed, Alinsky's first group, the Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council, had become a bastion of support for segregationist George Wallace in the 1960s.) Obama was also troubled by his own experience in South Chicago, where he had failed to make any headway on the community's central problem—the absence of jobs—and had been reduced to demanding repairs in public housing. That, too, had derived from acting according to Alinsky's principle of trying to win victories against the powers that be based on immediate self-interest.

But Obama was not ready to state his case forthrightly. ("We were all on our best behavior," Joravsky recalls.) Instead, he expressed his doubts obliquely by drawing a distinction between the "two roles that an organizer was supposed to play … getting power, getting the stop sign, making things work" and

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"the educative function of organizing." By the latter, Obama meant an organizer's duty to frame citizens' efforts in terms of a larger objective and a greater good: something more noble than dissuading realtors from selling homes to blacks in white neighborhoods or more substantial than getting a stop sign installed.

Obama put it this way: "The process whereby people in communities, like the community SON/SOC was organizing or the community where I was organizing, start to get bigger horizons, start to understand how they connect up with other people, how their power is involved with the power of other people—it seems to me that that strain gets lost. . . . At some point, you have to link up winning that stop sign or getting that home equity with the larger trends, larger movements in the city or the country." He quoted an Alinsky disciple as saying, "I am not trying to build some grand utopian organization. I would just like to win it." "That's problematic," Obama noted. In other words, winning wasn't important if what was won was harmful or insignificant.

But Obama didn't stop there. He had a litany of criticisms of Alinsky-style organizing that he wanted to put forward. He objected to community organizers' dismissal of charismatic leadership and of movements. Instead of making the point directly, he recalled a friend telling him of an IAF trainer who complained that "movements are rotten with charismatic leaders." Obama said his friend had responded, "That's nonsense. We want a movement. I would love to have Martin Luther King here right now." Obama argued that charismatic leaders and movements bring "long-term vision," and that community organizers cannot be effective without such vision.

Obama also criticized community organizers' "suspicion of politics." "The problem we face now in terms of organizing is that politics is a major arena of power," Obama said. "That's where your major dialogue, discussion, is taking place. To marginalize yourself from that process is a damaging thing, and one that needs to be rethought."

Before he was done, Obama had rejected the guiding principles of community organizing: the elevation of self-interest over moral vision; the disdain for charismatic leaders and their movements; and the suspicion of politics itself. But he did so in a way that seemed to elude the other participants. Two decades later, Green couldn't recall any disagreement over his more positive take on SON/SOC. Joravsky also didn't remember Obama's criticisms of organizing. Instead, he recalled thinking how "cool" and "well-spoken" Obama was.

Obama, too, seemed initially oblivious to the harsh implications of his own words. While he was at Harvard, he would return to Chicago to train organizers at Gamaliel, and, after graduating and moving back to Chicago, he would retain ties to the city's community organizing network—serving on the boards of the Woods fund and the Lugenia Burns Hope Center, which promotes organizing among African Americans on the city's South Side. But he would never again practice community organizing, as he did in the 1980s. And he would begin to construct a political identity for himself that was not simply different from his identity as a community organizer—but was, in fact, its very opposite.

Based purely on his organizing background, one would have expected Obama to become a bread-and-butter politician, a spokesman for his constituents' immediate needs. Instead, Obama became a politician of vision, not issues—one who appealed to voters' values rather than their immediate self-interest. As a state senator in Illinois, he was best known for his advocacy of government reform. Asked in September 1999 to explain why someone should vote for him for Congress against incumbent Bobby Rush, Obama told the *Hyde Park Citizen* that, unlike Rush, he had "a vision." And, as a Democratic presidential candidate, he has run on an abstract platform of "change" that appeals to many young and upscale voters, but has fallen flat among the white working-class voters whom Alinsky once courted.

Obama has also eschewed the retiring persona of the organizer. Initially awkward as a speaker, he became a charismatic politician whose run for president has produced something very much like a movement. And, while his campaign has used some techniques from community organizing to rally state-by-state support, it is the antithesis of the ground-up, locally dominated, naturally led network of community groups that Alinsky envisioned. Obama, in short, has become exactly the kind of politician his mentors might have warned against.

None of this is to say that Obama was wrong to abandon community organizing for politics. Or that his critique of organizing was incorrect. In fact, many of today's community organizers would acknowledge that Obama was absolutely right to question the limitations of Alinsky-style organizing. The elevation of self-interest at the expense of higher ideals can clearly be an ugly thing. Improving people's lives has to be about more than installing stop signs. And no one who hopes to truly change urban communities can stay out of politics altogether. Indeed, in contrast to what Alinsky advised, many community organizations now participate in political campaigns.

Still, one has to wonder: In making the transition from organizer to politician, did Obama go too far in rejecting one of the cardinal principles of community organizing? True, appeals to self-interest can sometimes lead organizations astray. But such appeals are also a necessary part of community organizing—and politics as well. Few candidates could hope to win an election at any level without convincing their constituents that they understand their immediate hopes and fears. And presidential candidates are no exception. Bill "I feel your pain" Clinton certainly had the ability to persuade voters that he identified with their interests. So did Ronald Reagan. Al Gore and John Kerry did not.

In this election, Obama can count on the votes of African Americans in Roseland as well as many upscale voters attracted by his message of change. But he also needs to win support from the descendants of Back of the Yards and SON/SOC—working-class voters who, today, are more worried about high gas prices and rising heath care costs than about the prospect of blacks moving in next door. To win their votes, Obama needs to do precisely what he once taught organizers to do: speak to the self-interest of ordinary people.

So far, this has not been Obama's strong suit as a presidential candidate. To his credit, he has certainly *talked* about gas prices and health insurance. But, as Obama would have told his trainees 20 years ago, conveying concern requires more than saying the right thing; it involves seeing the world from the vantage of those you are trying to win over—and convincing them that your empathy is sincere.

When Obama came to South Chicago, he believed in community organizing; within two-and-a-half years—by the time he and Jerry Kellman went for their late October walk around Harvard's campus—he was clearly growing disillusioned. Now, having fashioned a political identity in near-total opposition to the core principles of his one-time profession, Obama's bid for the presidency may come down to this: Is he willing to rediscover—and put into practice—one of the main principles he followed as a twentysomething activist all those years ago? ◆

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

TWO ACHIEVEMENTS

Jirí Menzel is back. This Czech director made a considerable splash in 1967 with *Closely Watched Trains*, but although he has been busy since then, his later work has not had comparable impact. Now comes *I Served the King of England*, and strangely, the intervening four decades whisk away. The new film has the same deceptive light touch as the earlier one, a lightness that partially masks the serious subject and yet explores it.

The time frame is again around World War II. In the earlier picture, a young man, obsessed with girls, who starts a job in a country railroad station gets involved in war activities. In the new film, a young man, keen on women, gets jobs in hotel restaurants in a small town and in Prague and eventually is involved in the war. (Menzel based both screenplays on novels by the eminent Bohumil Hrabal.)

In the first shot of the new film, the middle-aged Jan Dítě is released from prison after nearly fifteen years. The metal door clangs behind him, but he can't move: the strap of his bag is caught in the door. This small moment is a promise of the comic glances and wry symbols to come.

The screenplay intertwines Jan's earlier years, explaining how he landed in jail, and his post-prison days. As a youth, this small, eager, but shy fellow had only two ambitions: to be a millionaire and to own a grand hotel. In time he achieves both, but with some surprises en route. The mode in which his life story is told might be called fanciful realism—invention in the service of truth. Everything happens convincingly, yet with mockingly perfect timing, as if it were choreographed. Menzel particularly displays his gift for transmuting the stolid or grim with shots at the ends of episodes. A smugly successful salesman lays out his cash on the floor of his hotel room in orderly ranks. Then the entire cache floats up off the floor airily as if to taunt his smugness. Or: four prisoners sit around a small table plucking goose down and piling it on the table. Then the goose down rises and covers the screen in a sort of bitter loveliness.

I SERVED THE KING OF ENGLAND
Sony Pictures Classics

MOMMA'S MAN
Kino International

Jan (whose last name, Dítě, means child) moves from post to post in increasingly splendid hotels, aspiring to be one of the highly skilled, haughtily comported waiters. (The waiters' behavior is a species of samurai code. When the haughtiest of them trips while carrying a tray, he goes berserk, smashing things, and the other waiters understand.) The film's title has nothing to do directly with the story: it is simply a fact that a head waiter mentions to the awed Jan. The title underscores vacuous stiff tradition and the emptiness of Jan's awe.

Along with his varied waiting experiences, he encounters women. In the confected tenor of this film, absolutely every young woman he meets is gorgeous. When he visits brothels, they—it is a treasured European myth—are always homey and are staffed with good-hearted beauties.

War comes. Germans come. And here also comes the part of the story that deepens what has happened before. Jan falls in love with and marries Líza, a German girl who is a fanatical Nazi. Even her rebarbative zeal gets the Menzel touch. When Jan and Líza make love in their bedroom, she pushes his head to one side while he is slogging away so that she can gaze at a photo of Hitler. Soon she insists on joining the German army, and when she returns, she has for him a collection of valuable stamps taken from deported Jews. Conditioned by the petty hopes and ideals of his youth, Jan sells those stamps. They are the source of his millions and his own hotel.

Menzel is apparently asking us to realize that such a marriage, such a malfeasance, was possible for a man who, though pleasant enough, was a slave of acceptances. Morality, Menzel's film implies, is for some individuals a matter of atmospheric pressure. This doesn't make them admirable, just—with some generosity—understandable. Sixty years after World War II, Hrabal and Menzel were able to acknowledge these grainy discomforts about their fellow Czechs—and about people generally. And, rightly, they didn't put the shortcomings in a generally reprehensible man.

Then the war ends. A hotel swimming pool in Prague that had been filled with nude Aryan beauties, brought for impregnation by German soldiers, is now filled with nude male amputees. The Communists arrive. When Jan boasts that he is in good shape with fifteen million, he gets fifteen years in the clink. The valuable postage stamps fade figuratively and visually away.

The post-prison years, which interweave through all the above, show us a graying Jan working as a road builder in the country, re-educated in a certain sense, simplified by being freed of simple-mindedness. But here, too, the early piquant tone returns. To keep the post-prison section from seeming tractarian, the film brings in a lively young woman who promises spice.

ANTHONY RUSSO

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Oldřich Kaiser is appealingly seasoned as the older Jan. Ivan Barnev, in the larger role of the young Jan, provides eagerness and modesty and bursts of passion. Julia Jentsch as Líza is scarily fervent. Menzel, now in his seventies, sees his countrymen in a wide range of behaviors, and sees them with honesty and comprehension and a faint amusement that includes himself. Best of all, the minor protocols and major assaults of the characters are fused, paradoxically, by a truly lyrical talent.

Momma's Man is an act of daring. Azazel Jacobs, the American writer-director whose third feature this is, has made a film without a story, let alone a plot. As the picture moves along, we see that nothing is going to happen in any narrative or dramatic sense. We are meant to reside, to linger, in a mood, a state of mind. This is hardly the method of even such rarefied artists as Ozu and Bresson: it is less a form of film than of poetry or some kinds of short fiction. But this view soon increases our pleasure: as we realize the picture's special being, we also realize that it is holding us.

Mikey, the central character, is a former New Yorker in his thirties who now lives in California with his wife and child. The film takes place in New York, where Mikey has come to visit his parents. They live in a huge Tribeca loft, which is marvelously cluttered with every kind of bric-a-brac—furniture, pictures, souvenirs, a piano. This attic full of his past now embraces and captures Mikey, mostly because he has arrived at an age when it is possible.

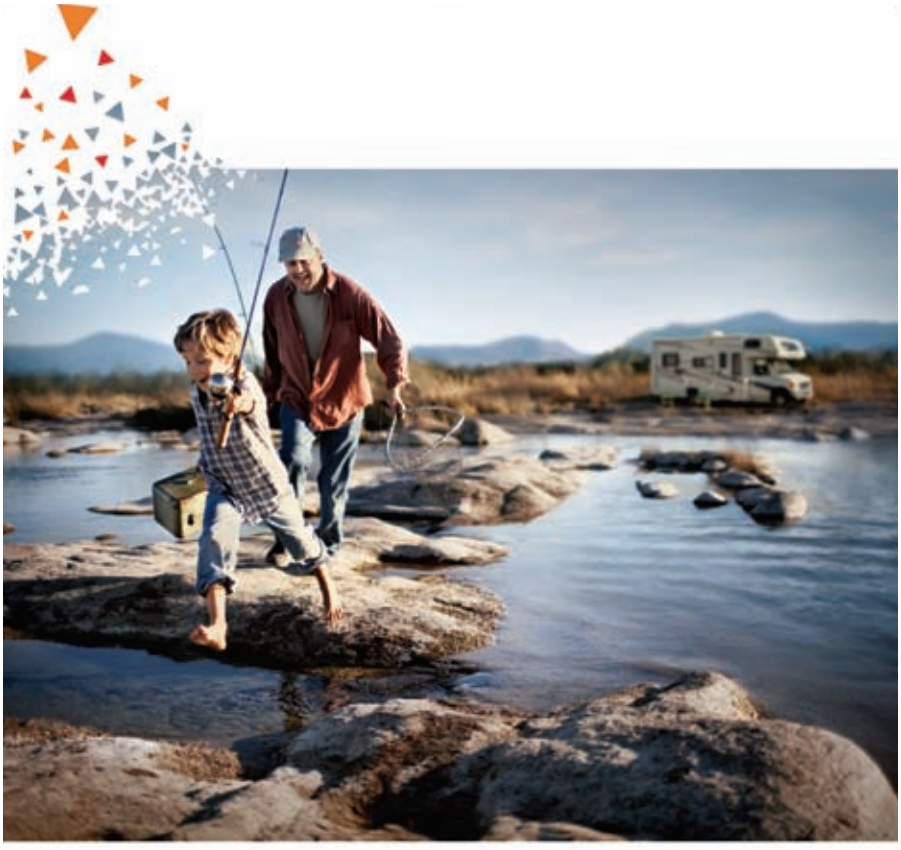
He wants to stay. He loves his wife and child, and he speaks to his wife, though not as often as she calls; but he keeps postponing his return to California. He doesn't talk much about his feelings, but his parents understand and, much as they love him, do not try to keep him. Despite the film's (inadequate) title, he never thinks in terms like "second childhood" or "return to the womb": he only knows that he is back in an environment, physical and temperamental, that he once loved. Without any loss of his feeling as husband and father, he finds it difficult to break loose.

What he is discovering, we can see, is that the life a person lives, no matter how pleasant, is only one life that might have been lived. For a few days, Mikey is back in the time before he had to choose. He has no large frustrated ambition in him: he just revisits the self he once was before commitment and, for a few days, dwells in that self.

Of course, as treated here, this is a male prerogative. His wife may have or maybe will have many of the same feelings, but she has to take care of the baby. Mikey, liberated, has the leisure to feel melancholy. He meets an old girlfriend for coffee—she has her baby with her—and they remember a high school date. He sees an old male friend, with whom he has some male-pal bonding. But mostly he just breathes—not the air of a paroled convict, but the air of a human being tacitly discovering that he is on a demarcated journey to mortality.

Jacobs is greatly aided by Matt Boren, who plays Mikey—and in an unusual way. Boren's face and persona are not striking. He could be the man who has come to fix the telephone. The fact that Boren, as unpoetic a type as possible, fully sounds the depths of the theme is a warrant of the picture's universality. Hamlet has to look like Hamlet, but Mikey, so to speak, doesn't have to look like Mikey.

Jacobs has cast his own parents as Mikey's parents; they give their extraordinary attic affectionate verity. Ken Jacobs is a well-known maker of experimental films, and his wife Flo is an artist. I don't know where they actually live, but they could live right here. Their son uses a handheld camera a bit more than he needed to, but possibly he wanted to emphasize the somewhat informal quality of the production. In any case, he dared to make this unusual film, and he made it memorable. ◆



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Martha C. Nussbaum

THE FIRST FOUNDER

The American Revolution of Roger Williams.

I.

RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE drives otherwise sane people crazy. The fact that some of my neighbors pursue salvation in a way that differs from my own is hard to contemplate without anxiety. Could it be that they are right and I am wrong? If I am right, as I think I am, shouldn't I try to save them? Above all, how on earth can we live together in an uncertain and dangerous world without agreeing on fundamental principles about life's purpose and meaning?

Given the depth of such anxieties in so many people, the struggle to create societies that protect religious liberty and show respect for religious difference is never-ending. When we consider the current uproar over Muslim immigration, particularly in Europe, we can see that the allegedly enlightened societies of the West still have a lot of learning to do. Instead of seeing ourselves as fighting on the side of the angels in a great "clash of civilizations," we should see each nation, Western and non-Western, as fighting its own internal "clash" between people who are prepared to live with others on terms of mutual respect and people who seek the protection of religious (and cultural) homogeneity. At a deeper level, each of us is always engaged, within ourselves, in an internal "clash of civilizations," as narcissistic fear contends with our capacities for concern and respect.

In this struggle, it helps to have philosophical friends. Locke, ubiquitously invoked in this connection, is a good enough friend, but somewhat lacking in psychological insight. The history of the North American colonies, however, shows us another friend, an even better one—a hero, really—whose writings, now virtually unknown, can help us greatly as we grapple with problems that are not unlike those he confronted in the seventeenth century. He is Roger Williams. Williams wrote many books, including two lengthy philosophical treatises that are among the major works on religious toleration in the history of Western thought. Prolix, diffuse, and ill-organized, their thousand pages are hardly ever consulted, while Locke's succinct *A Letter Concerning Toleration* is taught in countless college classrooms. Even Williams's American contemporaries did not have much knowledge of his books, which were published in England.

Williams, who founded Rhode Island in 1636, was a political leader who translated his ideas into practice, through both law and policy, in a way that was initially seen as shocking but that gradually shaped what other colonies aspired to and permitted. This influence was enhanced through Williams's voluminous public correspondence, which expressed his philosophical ideas in a compressed and available form. By the time of the American founding, virtually all state constitutions embodied ideas such as those Williams had instituted in the 1640s. James Madison, the chief architect of our Bill of Rights, had views that were remarkably similar to those of Williams, though he very likely did not read Williams's books. It is not too much of a stretch to view Williams as one of the shapers of our constitutional tradition.

ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY: SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF ROGER WILLIAMS
Edited by James Calvin Davis
(Harvard University Press, 288 pp., $19.95)

For us, Williams is important above all as a conversation partner whose humane insights can inform our own divisive debates. Three aspects of his thought deserve our attention. First, he developed a distinctive and impassioned view of conscience as a seat of emotion, imagination, and ethical choice through which each person seeks meaning in his or her own way. Conscience, for Williams, is the source of our equality, and it is worthy of equal respect wherever it is found. Political principles, he argued, must be based on that equal respect. Second, Williams believed that equal respect for conscience entails protecting an extensive sphere of freedom around the individual, and that this protection must be impartial, imposing no orthodoxy. To impose orthodoxy upon the striving conscience is nothing less than what Williams, in a memorable and repeated image, calls "Soule rape." And third, Williams maintained that a civil peace among people who differ in religion requires a moral consensus that is itself impartial, giving the ascendancy to no creed more than any other. Such a consensus is available because there is a part of the moral sphere that we can share while differing in ultimate religious commitments. Williams dramatized this idea by making his major work, *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution*, which appeared in 1644, a "conference" or dialogue between two friends called Truth and Peace, in which Truth acknowledges the importance of reaching an ethically grounded accommodation, for political purposes, with people whom one believes to be in error.

LIFE IN NEW ENGLAND was fragile and exposed. The wind, the seas, the forests, the deep snows—all this was very strange to people accustomed to life in England, whether urban or rural. "But oh poore dust and Ashes," Roger Williams wrote of himself and his fellows, "like stones once roling downe the Alpes, like the Indian Canoes or English Boats loose and adrift, where stop we until infinite mercy stop us." In his remarkable book *A Key Into the Language of America*, a study of Indian life and languages, Williams pondered the Indians' ability to coexist with impermanence and constant vulnerability in this "wild and howling land." Astonishingly, the Indians did not mind picking up and moving on to a new place whenever climate, insects, or sheer inclination moved them. "I once in travel lodged at a house," Williams wrote, "at which in my returne I hoped to have lodged againe there the next night, but the house was gone in that interim, and I was glad to lodge under a tree."

The Europeans of Massachusetts reacted to insecurity by enforcing orthodoxy of religious belief and practice. Roger Williams's lifelong intellectual adversary John Cotton, pastor of the First Church of Boston and one of Massachusetts's most influential religious leaders, wrote copiously in defense of religious persecution, arguing that it was necessary for civil order. It was also God's will, Cotton said, in order to separate the diseased element of society from the healthy element. Heretics and dissidents are like Satan in our midst. Even if they behave peaceably, they are enticements to sin.

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Cotton urged imprisonment, banishment, and other harsh penalties for the unorthodox.

Such reactions to insecurity are sadly familiar in America's history: in situations of insecurity, we are all too ready to project the causes of instability onto other people, grabbing hold of Cotton's seductive metaphor of a stain in our midst (his reply to Williams's great book was called *The Bloody Tenent, Washed, and Made White in the Bloud of the Lambe*) that must be removed if we are to resist corruption. What makes Williams of particular interest today is not just the high quality of his philosophical work. It is also the way in which he offers an alternative to the paranoid response to uncertainty, confidently urging on his readers attitudes of mercy, gentleness, reasonableness, and civility—all words that recur with obsessive frequency throughout his two great philosophical dialogues.

Williams's writings have long been virtually unavailable to the general public. Now Harvard University Press has published *On Religious Liberty: Selections From the Works of Roger Williams*, edited by scholar James Calvin Davis. Davis provides around three hundred pages of Williams's writings, including all-too-brief extracts from the two great works on persecution. He has decided to omit Williams's correspondence—an unfortunate decision, since the letters, though well edited, are as hard for the general reader to obtain as the treatises. Still, Davis has a keen eye for the telling passage, and he arranges the extracts helpfully, adding a lucid introduction. His fine volume will be especially useful for purposes of teaching, and it will sustain us while we await a more complete re-issue of the major works and letters.

II.

Since Williams was a political leader as well as a thinker, his thought must be assessed in the context of his career. He was born in England in 1603 to a prosperous merchant family. He grew up in London, near the Smithfield plain, where religious dissenters were sometimes burned at the stake. As a young man he attracted the attention of the eminent jurist Sir Edward Coke, chief justice of the King's Bench. Coke arranged for the young man's education at Sutton's Hospital, the future Charterhouse School, and then at Pembroke Hall in Cambridge University, where Williams received his A.B. in 1627, after a classical education that focused on natural law theories based on ancient Greek and Roman Stoicism, which suffuse Coke's work and were much in vogue at the time. Williams quickly impressed with his remarkable flair for languages, mastering Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, and Dutch. In this way he also earned John Milton's friendship: he taught Milton Dutch in exchange for Hebrew lessons. On graduation, Williams took orders in the Church of England, and in 1629 he accepted a chaplaincy at Otes in Essex, the manor house of Sir William Masham—grandfather of Sir Francis Masham, who was Locke's host at Otes in the 1690s.

In 1630, a leading Puritan reformer was placed in the pillory in London. One of his ears was cut off, one side of his nose was split, and he was branded on his face with the letters SS, for "Sower of Sedition." Later the other side of his nose was split and his other ear was cut off. For good measure, the man was then imprisoned for the rest of his life. Williams witnessed these events. He was already very critical of the Anglican orthodoxy, but in the aftermath of this atrocity he decided that he could not remain in England, and set sail for Massachusetts.

Williams was warmly welcomed by the leaders of Massachusetts Bay Colony. Although Boston found his views about individual conscience too radical, he was accepted by the congregation at Salem. But soon his dissenting began. He published a pamphlet attacking the colonists' claims to the Indians' property, remarking sarcastically that "Christian kings (so calld) are invested with Right by virtue of their christianitie to take and give away the Lands and Countries of other men." The officials of Massachusetts Bay called him into court, but took no action when he agreed to withdraw the pamphlet. Yet he continued to teach the falsity of the colonists' property claim. He also urged resistance to a proposed oath of loyalty to be taken by all colonists. During this period Williams spent some peaceful months at Plymouth, where he pursued his study of Indian life and languages.

By 1635–1636, the authorities saw that Williams was bent on continuing his divisive teaching, and ordered his arrest. Tipped off in advance, he fled. Looking back on the incident from Providence in 1670, he describes it this way: "I was unkindly and unchristianly (as I believe) driven from my howse and land, and wife and children (in the midst of N. Engl. Winter now, about 35 years past).... I steerd my course from Salem (though in Winter snow wch I feele yet) untl these parts, whrein I may say as Jacob, Peniel, that is I have seene the Face of God." In keeping with his sense of deliverance, Williams named the new settlement Providence.

A central element of life in the new settlement was respectful friendship with the Indians. Williams had always treated them as human beings, not beasts. He respected their dignity. When the great Narragansett chief Canonicus (who spoke no English) broke a stick ten times to demonstrate ten instances of broken English promises, Williams understood his meaning and took his part. When the colonists objected that the Indians could not own land because they were nomadic, Williams described their regular seasonal hunting practices, arguing that these practices were sufficient to establish property claims—a legal argument that strikingly anticipates very recent litigation over aboriginal land claims in Australia. Linguist that he was, Williams reports having, at this period, a "Constant Zealous desire to dive into the Natives Language," and he learned several of the languages by actually living with the Indians for long periods of time.

When Williams arrived as a refugee from Massachusetts, then, his dealings with the Indians had long prepared the way for a fruitful relationship. Chiefs Massasoit and Canonicus welcomed him as an old friend, because he had befriended them before he needed them. Throughout his life Williams kept up these friendships. One of the key provisions of the Charter of Rhode Island was that "itt shall not bee lawfull to or For the rest of the Collonies to invade or molest the native Indians," a provision that Williams particularly sought and, when it was granted, applauded, noting that hostility to the Indians "hath hietherto bene ... practiced to our Continuall and great grievance and disturbance." As he wrote to the governor of Massachusetts Bay, explaining his refusal to return, "I feel safer down here among the Christian savages along Narragansett Bay than I do among the savage Christians of Massachusetts Bay Colony."

Williams was not speaking of conversion: he never tried to convert the Indians. He was speaking of moral decency. He was fond of noting examples of Indian fairness and honesty, contrasting their behavior with that of his white neighbors. This experience of finding integrity and goodness outside the parameters of orthodoxy surely shaped his evolving views of political principles. And there was already something antinomian about the man, something that led him to such controversial friendships in the first place—a respectful curiosity about the varieties of humanity that is the paradigm of something valuable in our history as a nation of strangers and immigrants, though this value is now under stress.

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Williams immediately provided for ample religious liberty in the new colony. Rhode Island became a haven for people who were in trouble elsewhere. Baptists, Quakers, and other dissidents joined the Puritan dissenters. In 1658, fifteen Portuguese Jewish families arrived in Newport. They enjoyed the same religious liberty granted others—an astonishing fact, given that Jews in Britain did not gain full civil rights until 1858.

In 1643, Williams set sail for England to secure a charter for the new colony. During the voyage he wrote his book about Indian languages, and he wrote *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution* after his arrival. A democratic charter was obtained and liberty of conscience was made official. In 1652, Rhode Island passed the first law in North America making slavery illegal. Meanwhile, John Cotton's angry reply to *The Bloudy Tenent*, published in 1647, led Williams to produce another work about a hundred pages longer than the first one, refuting all of Cotton's arguments. Published in 1652 in London, it bears the extraordinary and unwieldy title, *The bloody Tenent Yet More Bloody: By Mr Cottons endevour to wash it white in the Blood of the Lambe; of whose precious Blood, spilt in the Blood of his Servants; and Of the blood of Millions spilt in former and later Wars for Conscience sake, that Most Bloody Tenent of Persecution for cause of Conscience, upon a second Tryal, is found now more apparently and more notoriously guilty.*

When the civil wars and the Restoration made it necessary to renegotiate the charter, Williams again went to England, and found in Charles II a ready ally for his experiment in religious liberty. The colony of Barbados already permitted religious liberty, by omission and by policy rather than by explicit royal guarantee. But the colony of Rhode Island was the first case of an official policy of religious liberty. Williams wrote with amusement of how shocked the king's ministers were by the charter. "But fearing the Lyons roaring, they coucht agnst their Wills in Obedience to his Maties pleasure."

The charter was shocking indeed—not only in its odd provision regarding the Indians, but above all in its clause regarding religious liberty:

> Noe person within the sayd colonye, at any tyme hereafter, shall bee any wise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any differences in opinione in matters of religion, and doe not actually disturb the civill peace of our sayd colony; but that all and everye person and persons may, from tyme to tyme, and at all tymes hereafter, freely and fully have and enjoye his and theire owne judgments and consciences, in matters of religious concernments, throughout the tract of lande hereafter mentioned; they behaving themselves peaceablie and quietlie, and not useing this libertie to lycentiousnesse and profanenesse, nor to the civill injurye or outward disturbance of others; any lawe, statute, or clause, therein contained, or to be contained, usage or custome of this realme, to the contrary hereof, in any wise, notwithstanding.

What does this clause protect? Belief and the expression of opinion in religious matters, clearly. But Williams throughout his writings was careful to insist that acts of worship also should enjoy protection. Indeed, in his own writings we rarely encounter the word "belief" without the word "worship" or "practice."

Williams introduces *The Bloudy Tenent* with the announcement that "consciences and worships" are all to be permitted. Elsewhere he uses phrases such as "for either professing doctrine, or practicing worship," "doctrine or practice," "holdeth or practiseth," "doctrines and worships," "to subscribe to doctrines, or practise worships." It is a bit unfortunate that the charter is less careful, but we can understand the latitude of its protection from the other direction, as stopping where civil disturbance begins. Williams was no John Stuart Mill: he thought that the business of civil government included not only the protection of individuals from harm to their rights by others, but also the maintenance of public order and morality. Thus, like virtually everyone in his time, he favored laws against adultery and other so-called "morals laws." But not on religious grounds: Williams's conception of public morality keeps it quite distinct from religious norms and justifications.

The final provision in the clause is very interesting. The charter guarantees liberty of religious belief and practice even when a law or custom forbids it. In other words, if the law says that you have to swear an oath before God to hold public office, this law is nullified by the charter. Moreover, it appears that the charter nullifies the applicability of laws to individuals when such laws threaten their religious liberty. If a law says that people have to testify on Saturday, and your religion forbids this, then that law is not applicable in your case. It would appear, in other words, that Williams had forged something like the modern legal concept of "accommodation" on grounds of conscience. Laws of general applicability have force only up to the point where they threaten religious liberty (and where public order and safety are not at stake). This policy was stated explicitly by Williams in a letter. Comparing the colony to a ship at sea on which Christians, Jews, pagans, and Muslims have all embarked, he remarked that the captain of that ship is entitled to require anything that is connected to the ship's safety and that of her passengers, but otherwise there is to be the widest possible religious liberty for all passengers alike.

III.

Behind this important political achievement was a body of thought as rich on these issues as that of John Locke, and considerably more perceptive concerning the psychology of both persecutor and victim. At its heart is an idea, or image, on which Williams focused with deep emotion and obsessional zeal: the idea of the preciousness and the dignity of the individual human conscience. Conscience, for Williams, plays the role that the directive faculty of moral choice plays in the ancient Stoic authors whom he studied: it is a faculty of searching and choosing, although for Williams it includes imagination and emotion as well as ethical reasoning. It is, Williams holds, the main source of our identity as agents: it is "indeed the man."

Williams had his own intense religious beliefs, which entailed that most people around him were wrong. Their error, however, does not mean that they do not have the precious faculty of conscience. Consider this remarkable sentence: "This Conscience is found in all mankinde … in Jewes, Turkes, Papists, Protestants, Pagans, etc." And although truth is important in Williams's universe, truth is not the basis of respect. What he reveres is the faculty for finding truth, the capacity for searching and choosing. Like the ancient Stoics, he holds that this faculty exists in people of all religions. He is fond of lists, and usually includes Jews, Muslims, Catholics, pagans (prominently including the Indians), and even atheists, whom he calls Antichristians. He insists that all consciences deserve not just respect, but equal respect. The remarkable sentence at the opening of *The Bloudy Tenent* is typical: "It is the will and command of God that (since the coming of his Sonne the Lord Jesus) a permission of the most paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or antichristian consciences and worships, bee granted to all men in all Nations and Countries."

So: everyone has inside himself or herself something infinitely precious, something that demands respect from us all,

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Dr. Brooks Landon is a Professor of English and Collegiate Fellow at The University of Iowa and Director of The University of Iowa General Education Literature Program. From 1999 to 2005, Professor Landon was chair of the Iowa English Department. He received his Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin.

Among Professor Landon's numerous awards and accolades are a University of Iowa M.L. Huit Teaching Award and an International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts Distinguished Scholarship.

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and something in regard to which we are all basically equal. Williams now argues that this precious something needs extensive space to unfold itself, to pursue its own way. To respect human beings in the equality of their consciences is therefore to accord that sort of space to each and every one of them. Williams expresses indignation that someone who "speakes so tenderly for his owne, hath yet so little respect, mercie, or pitie to the like consciencious perswasions of other Men.... Are all the Thousands of millions of millions of Consciences, at home and abroad, fuell onely for a prison, for a whip, for a stake, for a Gallowes? Are no Consciences to breath the Aire, but such as suit and sample his?"

These images are revealing. They tell us that Williams thinks of consciences as delicate, vulnerable, living things—things that need to breathe and not to be imprisoned. Here, I think, Williams made momentous progress beyond the Stoicism of his classical education. Stoic thinkers treat the moral faculties of a person as invulnerable, rock-hard; they cannot be damaged by worldly conditions. A slave, they say, is not less free internally for being a slave. In such a view, it would appear that external coercion is not all that important. For this reason, Stoics have difficulty drawing political conclusions from their arguments about human dignity. Williams, by contrast, sees that the conscience is not invulnerable: it can be prevented from acting, and it can also, more deeply, be damaged or defiled by what happens to it. And this insight is necessary for a workable doctrine of political liberty.

Williams has the keenest sensitivity to any damage to this precious thing, comparing persecution repeatedly to "spirituall and soule rape." It is "soule rape" when any person is limited with respect to either belief or practice (so long as he is not violating civil laws or harming others): "I acknowledge that to molest any person, Jew or Gentile, for either professing doctrine, or practicing worship merely religious or spirituall, it is to persecute him, and such a person (whatever his doctrine or practice be true or false) suffereth persecution for conscience." To be more precise, Williams has two distinct images for persecution: rape and imprisonment, which correspond to different types of damage to conscience. Persecution is like imprisonment in that people whose faculty of conscience is undamaged within still need breathing space to act on their conscience's promptings, searching for meaning through whatever forms of prayer, worship, or speech they select. But persecution is also like rape, in that it goes into a person's very depths, and there it does terrible damage. Williams thinks that being forced to affirm what you do not believe can harm the soul in its very capacity to strive, deforming and weakening it (though it never destroys the basis of equal respect, because it never extinguishes the capacity for striving). So what is needed is, first, protection for conscience so that it can grow undefiled, and, second, protection of a space around it so that it can venture out into the world and conduct its search.

Persecution is therefore a terrible error, one of the worst there can be. Williams explicitly declares that it is a worse error than heresy. Indeed, persecution is a doctrine "which no Uncleannes, no Adulterie, Incest, Sodomie, or Beastialitie can equall, this ravishing and forcing (explicitly or implicitly) the very Soules and Consciences of all the Nations and Inhabitants of the World." Williams does not believe that the offenses to which he compares persecution are trivial—indeed, he is inclined to favor the death penalty for adultery. So we can see how strong his objection to persecution is, if it is worse than these things. Most rulers in all ages, he concludes, have practiced "violence to the Souls of Men."

One of Williams's reasons for hating persecution is instrumental: if you force someone, it hardens their opposition, preventing their voluntary conversion. He makes this point often when he is in ad hominem debate with Cotton, and it was a common Protestant argument, one that Locke later made central to his own case. But one cannot read Williams and doubt that he also believes damage to conscience to be an intrinsic wrong, a desecration of what is most precious about human beings. Williams has insisted that this precious something is in us all, and is worthy of *equal* respect. Therefore it is a heinous wrong to give it freedom for some (the orthodox) and to deny this same freedom to others. Again and again he hammers home the charge of partiality and unfairness. Magistrates "give Libertie with a partiall hand and unequall balance." How "will this appear to be equall in the very eye of Common peace and righteousnesse?" His own marginal summaries of his argument, particularly in the later work, keep recurring to this theme: "Unchristian partiality," "Gross partiality to private interests," "Gross partiality the bloody doctrine of persecution."

Williams has a keen nose for special pleading and preferential treatment, and he sees it everywhere that restrictions on religious liberty are found. He suggests that the error of the persecutor is a kind of anxiety-ridden greed, which is hypocritically disguised as virtue. Anxious and insecure, each individual aims to carve out special protections and privileges for himself by attacking in others what he most values in his own life. In 1670, in a letter to the governors of Massachusetts and Connecticut, he indicts them for a hypocritical and unfair set of principles: "Your Selvs praetend libertie of Conscience, but alas, it is but selfe (the great God Selfe) only to yourselves."

If persecution is the worst of errors, liberty of conscience is, as Williams repeatedly states, a "most precious and invaluable Jewel." The proponent of liberty does not indulge in special pleading. Even though he believes he is right, he has an even-handed spirit of love and civility to all men, grounded in respect for their freedom. In one unforgettable passage Williams states that persecution is not only "to take the being of Christianity out of the World, but to take away all civility, and the world out of the world, and to lay all upon heapes of confusion." What does he mean by saying that persecution takes "the world out of the world"? I think he is expressing the view that the spirit of love and gentleness, combined with the spirit of fair play, is at the heart of our worldly lives with one another. Take these things away and you despoil the world itself. You make it nothing but a heap of confusion and pain.

IV.

Williams is a very emotional writer. His style is deeply subjective and passionate. Still, it is not implausible to find themes in his writings that anticipate some central ideas of Kant a century later. At the heart of both men's thought are two notions: the duty to respect humanity as an end wherever we find it; and the duty to be fair, not to make an exception for one's own case. Indeed, respecting humanity *entails* not making an exception of oneself. Just as Kant asks a person to test the principle of his or her conduct by asking whether it could without contradiction be made a universal law for all human beings, so Williams's critique of the leaders of Massachusetts and Connecticut is that their idea cannot pass a test of that sort: they love freedom—but only for themselves. They could not will persecution as a universal law, and their selfish-

ANTHONY RUSSO

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ness prevents them from willing freedom of conscience (which could pass the Kantian test) as a universal law.

Kant's second test for our ethical principles is one that he called the Formula of Humanity: he asks us to test a principle by seeing whether it treats humanity as an end. We are to ask whether we are really showing respect to human beings, or whether we are just using them as objects in the pursuit of our own selfish ends. This complaint, too, is a constant theme in Williams's writing: the conscience is precious, but people use other people's consciences to serve their own fearful and greedy ends. Kant's third way of testing principles invokes the idea of autonomy. We are to ask ourselves whether we can view our principle as a law that we could give to ourselves. There is no precise echo of this idea in Williams, but his insistence on the quest of the individual conscience, and the priceless value of freedom in this quest, is greatly in harmony with Kant's way of thinking. For both, the source of moral principles, and of all moral worth, is ultimately in our own freedom, and that freedom must be respected. For both, doing the right thing because of obedience to a law imposed from outside has no moral worth at all. Kant speaks of good principles as constituting a "realm of ends," a virtual society of free beings who respect one another as equals, and this is what Williams is after, I believe, when he says that persecution takes "the world out of the world": it destroys the basis of human fellowship in respect, freedom, and civility.

So Roger Williams lies at the beginning of a tradition of thought about religious fairness that resonates to the present day. And Williams has provided an extra measure of psychological insight, helping us to see why persecution is so attractive and what emotional attitudes might be required to resist it. If Williams had offered only his account of conscience and its fair, impartial treatment, he would already have made a large contribution to our understanding of religious liberty.

But he accomplished still more, developing an elaborate account of the proper jurisdictions of religious and civil authority that anticipates Locke's more famous account and that still offers helpful guidance. In this part of his work, Williams is replying to a "model" of church and state proposed by John Cotton. Truth asks Peace what book she has there. Peace produces the Cotton manuscript, and reads from it the claim that the church must hold high authority in the civil realm, and should be superior to all civil magistrates, if the peace is to be preserved. The two hundred pages that follow contain Williams's rebuttal, his alternative "model."

According to Williams, there are two separate sets of ends and activities in human life, and corresponding to these are two sorts of authority. Civil authority concerns "the bodies and goods of subjects" (exactly the account that Locke later gives). Civil authority must protect people's property and bodily security, and it may use force to do so. Its foundation lies in the people, and it is they who choose civil magistrates. The other sphere of human life is that of the soul and its safety. Churches have this sphere as their jurisdiction, with the proviso that their only proper means of addressing the soul is persuasion. The two sorts of authority, civil and spiritual, can coexist peaceably together. Peace is in jeopardy only to the extent that churches overstep their boundaries and start making civil law or interfering with people's property and liberty.

Williams now tells us that there is, of course, a way in which the civil state needs to make laws "respecting religion": namely, it has to make laws protecting it, proclaiming, for example, "that no persons Papists, Jewes, Turkes, or Indians be disturbed at their worship (a thing which the very Indians abhor to practice toward any)." Such protective laws are not only permitted, they are also extremely important, "the Magna Charta of highest liberties." There is, he continues, another type of law "respecting religion" that is very different: the sort of law that establishes, or forbids, acts of worship, and says who can and cannot be a minister, and so on. To say that these should be civil laws "is as far from Reason, as that the Commandments of Paul . . . were civil and earthly constitutions."

John Cotton makes two claims that Williams has to answer in order adequately to defend his radical position. First, Cotton makes a claim about peace and stability: that people simply cannot live at peace with one another unless some religious orthodoxy is established. In response, Williams invokes both reason and experience on his side. People with false religious views, he says, may be perfectly decent citizens. We see this all the time: people do live together peacefully, so long as they respect one another's conscience-space. (Life with the Indians provided him with an illustration.) What really breaks the peace is persecution: "Such persons onely breake the Cities or Kingdomes peace, who cry out for prison and swords against such who crosse their judgement or practice in Religion."

Cotton's second argument concerns competence. He claims that being a good citizen and being a good civil magistrate are inseparable from having the right religion. We simply do not want our public life to be run by sinners, because they are making very important decisions, and if they are sinners they will do so sinfully and badly. (There are certainly latter-day Cottonites among us now.) Here Williams makes one of his most interesting and novel arguments. God has created different sorts of things in the world, he observes. There are "divers sorts of goodness" corresponding to these different sorts of things. He illustrates this point at length, talking about the goodness of artifacts, plants, animals, and so on. One of the ways God created diversity in the world was to create a type of "civill or morall goodness" that is "commendable and beautifull" in its own right, and that is distinct from spiritual goodness. It can be there in its full form, and be beautiful, even if the person is religiously in error, even "though Godlines which is infinitely more beautifull, be wanting."

What is needed to be a good subject in a civil state is the moral sort of goodness, and it is that sort that we need also in our civil magistrates. Later, returning to the point, Williams insists that the foundation of the magistrate's authority "is not Religious, Christian, &c. but naturall, humane and civill." For many activities in human life, a worldly foundation is sufficient: "a Christian Captaine, Christian Merchant, Physician, Lawyer, Pilot, Father, Master, and (so consequently) Magistrate, &c. is no more a Captaine, Merchant, Physician, Lawyer, Pilot, Father, Master, Magistrate, &c. then a Captaine, Merchant, &c. of

The Feather Against Which My Heart Will Be Weighed

The crow feather I found was not an idea.
The crow feather was a black slash on the green lawn.
It was a way of counting. One. One.

The crow feather seemed to be waiting for me.
It rested, abided, as though placed just so
for the one time I would walk to its threshold.

I believe the crow feather when it is in my hand.
I know that it is a feather in my hand,
black quill, inkless, for writing out the gospel.

MICHAEL CHITWOOD

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any other Conscience or Religion." Particularly surprising is his casual mention of "father" as a role whose duties can be fully executed independently of spiritual enlightenment. For Williams, in sum, the civil state has a moral foundation, but a moral foundation need not be—more, it must not be—a religious foundation. The necessary moral virtues (honesty is one to which Williams devotes special emphasis) can be agreed on and practiced by people from many different doctrines. To be sure, Williams adds, a person's religion will connect these moral virtues to higher ends; but so far as the moral sphere itself goes, orthodox and dissenter, religious and non-religious, can agree.

It is not at all fanciful to see here an adumbration of John Rawls's idea of civil society as involving a set of moral principles concerning which people from different "comprehensive doctrines" can join in an "overlapping consensus." Like Williams, Rawls stresses that political society has a moral foundation. But he holds that this is a "module" that can be linked to different religious doctrines in a variety of different ways. Although religious people will certainly feel that their religion provides the moral principles with their highest ends or deepest sources (here again he agrees with Williams), they can nonetheless agree about the moral terrain in a way that is, for practical purposes, "freestanding"—in other words, not requiring the acceptance of a religious orthodoxy. So we do not have, exactly, a "wall of separation" between people's religions and their political principles. (Williams used that phrase only once, in a letter, and not at all in his major writings.) We do have separation of jurisdictions between church and state, but where people are concerned, they will rightly see the morality of public life as one part of their "comprehensive doctrine"—a part that they can share with others without converting them to what they take to be the true religion.

This idea is much more helpful for the purpose of toleration and respect than the bare idea of "separation," which might suggest that the state does not have anything to do with the deep ethical matters that are so central to the religions. The state needs to be built on moral principles, and it would be weird and tyrannical to ask religious people to accept the idea that moral principles are utterly "separate" from their religious principles. The idea of an overlapping consensus—or, to put it in Williams's way, the idea of a moral goodness that we can share while differing on ultimate religious ends—is an idea that helps us think about our shared life much more lucidly and fairly than the unclear idea of separation. We must respect one another's freedom and equality, the deep sources of conscience that lead us through life. We will do this only if we keep religious orthodoxy out of our common political life. But we must base that life on ethical principles that, for many of us, also have a religious meaning and justification. All we need do, when we join with others in a common political life, is to acknowledge that someone might have those virtues, in the way that is relevant for politics, while not sharing our own view of life's ultimate meaning. If we once grant that, then Williams's other argument concerning impartiality will lead us to want a state that has no religious orthodoxy, that only in this sense "separate" from religion.

V.

Looking back at history, we ought to agree with Williams. We should, and often do, separate a person's specific religion from the kind of goodness we look for in a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher, even an adoptive parent. That we so obsessively focus on the religions of political candidates, as contrasted with moral virtues that we all can share, is a fact of American political life that we should regret and attempt to change.

We can make our account of Williams's revolution more precise if we compare his thought to that of John Locke. Locke probably knew Williams's work. He wrote *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, published in 1689, at Otes in Essex, the same noble house where Williams was employed. And his argument bears a close resemblance to Williams's argument in the general nature of their conclusions about the role of the state, and in their focus on "equal and impartial liberty," as Locke puts it. And yet there are significant and revealing differences—all of which, I think, should make us prefer Williams's approach.

For a start, Locke seems to think that equal liberty is compatible with a religious establishment. But Williams is keenly aware of the danger of religious establishments as threats to both liberty and equality: to liberty, because a dominant sect will easily slip into curbing the conscience space of minorities; to equality, because the very existence of an orthodoxy makes a statement that citizens are not fully equal. Here Williams anticipates a famous argument of Madison's: establishment means that we do not all enter the public square "on equal conditions." At the time of the founding, the central argument against establishments was that equality argument; directly or not, it was Williams's argument.

Williams, moreover, gives us in his discussions of conscience an account of the moral basis of the political doctrine, telling us what equal respect is all about and why it is so important. There is nothing like this in Locke, at least not in the *Letter*. And Locke and Williams have subtly different positions on "accommodation," that is, on the question of whether laws applicable to all should contain exceptions for people with special religious requirements. Locke is in favor of the exceptionless rule of law, provided that the laws themselves are neutral. Some laws maliciously target minorities, and those laws must go. If it is legal to speak Latin in a school, it must be legal to speak Latin in a church. If it is legal to bathe in water for the sake of health, it must be legal to bathe in water for the sake of baptism. But there Locke draws the line. If there is any non-malicious law that has the incidental effect of burdening minorities, then the person whose conscience poses an obstacle to his obeying that law had better follow conscience, because eternal salvation is more important than jail—but still he will have to go to jail or pay the fine.

Williams is subtly, but momentously, different: he allows exceptions to general laws for conscience's sake, up to the point where the person's conduct would threaten peace and public safety. In so holding, he anticipates a norm that became general by the time of the founding: all the state constitutions had free exercise clauses with similar "peace and safety" overrides. (Madison actually favored an even more protective standard: that there be no burden to conscience unless the constitution itself is in jeopardy.) The practices of the colonies involved granting such conscience-based exemptions without legal penalty: Jews did not have to testify on Saturday; sects that objected to oaths did not have to swear; Quakers and Mennonites were exempt from military conscription. Most remarkably, and only in Rhode Island, Jews were exempted from the incest law if they wanted to contract uncle-niece marriages on religious grounds.

The laws remained valid, but religious minorities did not have to obey them. In the early days of the Republic, George Washington wrote a letter to the Quakers explaining his stance as its first president concerning their conscientious refusal of military service: "I assure you very explicitly, that in my opinion the conscientious scruples of all men should be treated with great delicacy and tenderness; and it is my wish and desire, that the laws may always be as extensively accommodated to them, as a due regard for the protection and es-

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sential interests of the nation may justify and permit." This is pure Williams; and it is far from what Locke's stricter notion of the rule of law would permit.

The contrast between Williams and Locke is still with us, in the form of divergent standards that have played a role in recent Supreme Court debates. The Williams idea was long a hallmark of free exercise jurisprudence, in the form of what has come to be known as the "*Sherbert* test," after an important case in 1963 involving a woman who was fired because her Seventh-Day Adventist beliefs forbade her to work on Saturday, and was then denied unemployment compensation on the grounds that she had refused "suitable work." The Court, finding in her favor, said that government may not impose a "substantial burden" on a person's free exercise of religion without a "compelling state interest." The case had an important equality aspect: the fact that Saturday and not Sunday was the required day put unfair pressure on this minority woman, pressure that the majority did not have to face.

This was our legal standard for some years, but in 1990 the Lockean position took control, with Justice Scalia's controversial opinion in *Employment Division* v. *Smith*, a case involving Native American peyote use. Scalia declared that laws must rule exceptionlessly, so long as they were neutral and not discriminatory. Like Locke, Scalia is interested in legal neutrality: when a Florida community passed an ordinance forbidding ritual animal sacrifice he struck it down, holding that the fact that they allowed animals to be slaughtered in all sorts of other ways showed that they were simply targeting Santería worshipers. But he does not believe that courts should go beyond this, and insist on the protection of conscience against laws that are not hostile—although he is willing to allow the legislature to pass such exemptions if it wants. What this conflict over accommodation is really about is the equality of minorities in a majority world. Rules about workdays, drugs, and a host of other matters favor the majority—so alcohol is legal and peyote is not, Sunday is the usual day of rest and Saturday is not. Williams understood the vulnerability of minority conscience in a world of majority rule, and his more protective standard should, in my view, be restored.

And a further difference between Williams and Locke is that Locke argues from Protestant premises most of the time. He seems uninterested in finding arguments for toleration that all citizens can share. Though Williams frequently alludes to Christian norms, he tries hard to develop an independent ethical argument for his political principles, based on the dignity and vulnerability of conscience, the equal worth of all consciences, and the needs of consciences for ample space. Williams was used to arguing with people who did not share his religious views, and so he found ways of arguing that do not presuppose the correctness of his own position.

Locke and Williams also conceive the space of the political differently. Locke speaks in terms of separation of jurisdictions. For him, religion and politics do not overlap at all. For Williams, the different religious doctrines meet and overlap in a shared moral space. Each religious person will connect this moral space to his own higher religious goals and ends; but within that space we are all able to speak a common language and share moral principles. As I have argued, this idea of overlap is ultimately more fruitful than the idea of separation. Williams does not ask religious people to give up ways in which their religion links politics with faith. He simply asks people to live and talk together in the shared space, without compromising equality by introducing religious doctrines into the institutions they create and sustain.

Locke was not distinguished as a moral psychologist, and he had nothing to say about why people persecute others. Williams was a subtle psychologist of injustice. He painstakingly traced persecution to its roots in the anxieties and insecurities of the persecutors, and he carefully studied the accompanying desire to create security by lording it over others. Williams had a keen sense both of the inner life of the persecutor and of the inner vulnerability of the persecuted to something that is very like rape, an inner shattering of the soul's integrity and peace. He also understands clearly how people engage in special pleading to favor their own case, while appearing to defend morality itself. Could it be that, in the matter of religion and politics, of toleration and its grounds, Roger Williams was the greater philosopher?

Williams's work and career provide the basis for a politics based on equal respect for conscience. But he was too shrewd to expect that this goal would be attained easily or quickly. At the end of *The Bloudy Tenent*, Truth and Peace remark that they do not actually spend much time together. So often they meet up lovingly, and are then abruptly parted by hypocrisy and selfish partiality. But finally they are aided by the appearance of an unexpected ally. At the very end of the work, a third character makes her appearance. "But loe!" says Peace. "Who's here?" Truth replies, "Our Sister Patience, whose desired company is as needful as delightfull."

Patience utters not a word, but she is clearly present. In his book on Indian languages, Williams wrote eloquently of the patience of the Indians, who could sit silently for ages, waiting for what they want. "Every man hath his pipe of their Tobacco, and a deepe silence they make, and attention give to him that speaketh." To his own impatient world, Williams commended this alien but local example. Now, at the close of his great dialogue, he represents Patience as, in effect, an Indian, silent after the prolixity of her sisters, waiting for a time that may be very long in coming, a time of equal respect for people who differ.

Notice the psychological insight in Williams's choice of words: "whose desired company is as needful as delightfull." For the anxious, self-focused people Williams describes, bent on control, patience may be attainable, but it is a painful virtue. What the anxious person really wants is for others to do what the anxious person has already decided they should do; and so waiting for them to be themselves and live the way they choose to live is stressful. To experience Patience as not only "needful" but also as "delightful" is the attitude of someone who actually enjoys the other person's freedom, finding lack of control over the other person's choices and actions not an inconvenience to be endured, but a source of exhilaration and even joy. Given human weakness and the long history of its incarnation in politics and power, such an attitude—we might call it political love—is a complex and delicate achievement, a virtue manifested, here, only in an open-ended silence. In that silence, after the close of so much speech, rested Roger Williams's hope for the future. ◆

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GETTING IT WRONG

BAD MONEY: RECKLESS FINANCE, FAILED POLITICS, AND THE GLOBAL CRISIS OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM
By Kevin Phillips
(Viking, 239 pp., $25.95)

Turmoil in the financial market and insecurity in the labor market—we have plenty of both—bring out good and bad books, like good and bad mushrooms after a rain. In the instance before us it is the financial market that is in turmoil, and this is definitely not a good book. The only nice thing I can say about *Bad Money* is that taking critical aim at our complex, overblown, and now evidently dangerous financial system is a fine idea. The trouble is that Kevin Phillips stays throughout at the superficial level of Chicken Little. Terrible things are happening, and will continue to happen; but despite a certain pretentious hinting at deeper understanding and a few loose references to historical parallels, there is nothing very enlightening to be found in these pages.

I will begin with a trivial but symbolic example: the title of the book. It comes from a common description of Gresham's Law, quoted opposite the title page: "Bad money drives out good money." Gresham's Law had a precise meaning in context. When money consisted of the circulation of metal coins, their intrinsic value was tied to the market value of the gold or silver or copper that they actually contained. (If a one-shekel coin contained less than a shekel's worth of silver, no one would bring silver to the mint; if the coin contained more, anyone with a fire and a pot could profit by melting it down.) Kings would occasionally cheat by minting underweight coins, and other crooks might shave a little metal off the coins that passed through their hands.

A knowledgeable person who had both full-weight, or good, coins and underweight, or bad, coins in his pocket would naturally use the bad coins in any transaction, if he could get away with it, and hang on to the good coins. Thus bad money would be found in circulation and good money in hoards. That is what Gresham meant by bad money driving out good money (that is, out of circulation). But none of this has anything to do with the contents of Phillips's book, not even metaphorically. He is entitled to call his book by any name he likes, of course; but the unexplained reference to Gresham's Law functions only as an unearned claim to arcane knowledge.

Later in his book Phillips says something different. Money is "bad," he maintains, when "a leading world economic power passing its zenith … lets itself luxuriate in finance at the expense of harvesting, manufacturing, or transporting things." This tends to lead to "runaway public and private debt, gross speculative biases, tenfold and twentyfold leveraged gambling, unchecked and barely regulated 'product' innovation, and a tendency toward periodic panics and instability"—not to mention "bring[ing] the weakness of human nature to the fore." I also believe that the financial system has become too big and too opaque for the good of the economy that it is supposed to finance, and that it is by now at the margin more trouble than it is worth. But that characteristically overwritten passage, apart from having nothing to do with Gresham's Law, is merely an attempt to make adjectives sound like analysis.

Phillips points out, several times, that the financial services industry in the United States now originates a little more than 20 percent of GDP, as compared with about 12 percent for manufacturing. He thinks that this is way too large a share to be healthy, and that it suggests an economy excessively devoted to peddling complicated pieces of paper instead of producing real stuff. (Finance accounts for only 10 percent of GDP in Britain, by contrast, despite London's status as a financial center.) How would one know what the right size of the financial sector might be? A country might legitimately specialize in finance and sell its services to others, just as it might specialize in computer hardware or software. So big is not necessarily bad. But there is no discussion in Phillips's book of any constructive function that a right-sized financial sector would perform, so that the reader might be able to understand just how much is too much.

Every elementary economics textbook explains to the beginning student that a financial system is intended to perform two important functions in a modern economy. Somehow a nation's savings has to finance its investments in housing, industrial and commercial buildings and machinery, computers, inventories, and so on. The saving is done by a very large number of households and institutions, ranging from very small to very big. The investment is done by a smaller—but still huge—number of mostly medium-to-large business firms. The first function of the financial system is to "intermediate" in this process: to collect the savings in many forms—bank accounts, mutual funds, insurance-company reserves, direct purchases of stocks—and to allocate it to the firms and other entities that seem to have the most profitable ways to use it to build real capital. The financial sector, needless to say, collects a fee for this service: it pays savers less than it charges investors. (I omit international flows of saving and investment, as well as the financing of local, state, and national governments. The financial sector intermediates here, too.)

The investment decisions of businesses have uncertain outcomes. The businesses themselves cannot know how their long-lived investments will eventually turn out; and the ultimate savers know even less. And investment decisions generate real risks, as we are all now painfully aware. So do most other transactions intermediated by the financial system, though the risks may be tied only tenuously to the production and the distribution of goods and services. And so the second function of the financial sector is to arrange transactions that shift the bearing of commercial risks from those who are prepared to pay a fee to get rid of them to those who are less averse to risk and are willing to take them on in exchange for a fee. This is a complicated business, more or less by definition. It is full of surprises. Even the basic underlying risks are complicated, and reasonable people—let alone the unreasonable ones—may evaluate them very differently. The risks generated within the financial sector are even more complicated, more psychological, more open to manipulation, and harder to understand and value than those that arise from "real" events.

In addition to deploring the excesses of the financial system, it is worth noticing also that it often performs useful functions. Businesses finance a substantial fraction of their fixed investment from their own saved profits; but the capital markets do allocate the rest, maybe about half, just as the textbooks say. To take another example, the securitization

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of home mortgages, despite its obvious potential for toxicity, undoubtedly expanded the supply of capital to the mortgage market and reduced the cost of home ownership. The same financial innovation also permitted or encouraged the selling of some mortgages to predictably unqualified borrowers.

Could we redesign the mechanism to achieve most of the benefits of a broader supply of mortgage capital while sharply limiting the scope for predation and instability? This question calls for serious thought; but serious thought is not on Phillips's agenda. Still, it is worth noting—and this is his sort of thing—that when the Federal Reserve recently proposed some fairly anodyne improvements in the regulation of mortgage lending, the industry instantly opposed them as incipient socialism, and claimed implausibly that even the smallest regulatory safeguards would dry up the supply of loans.

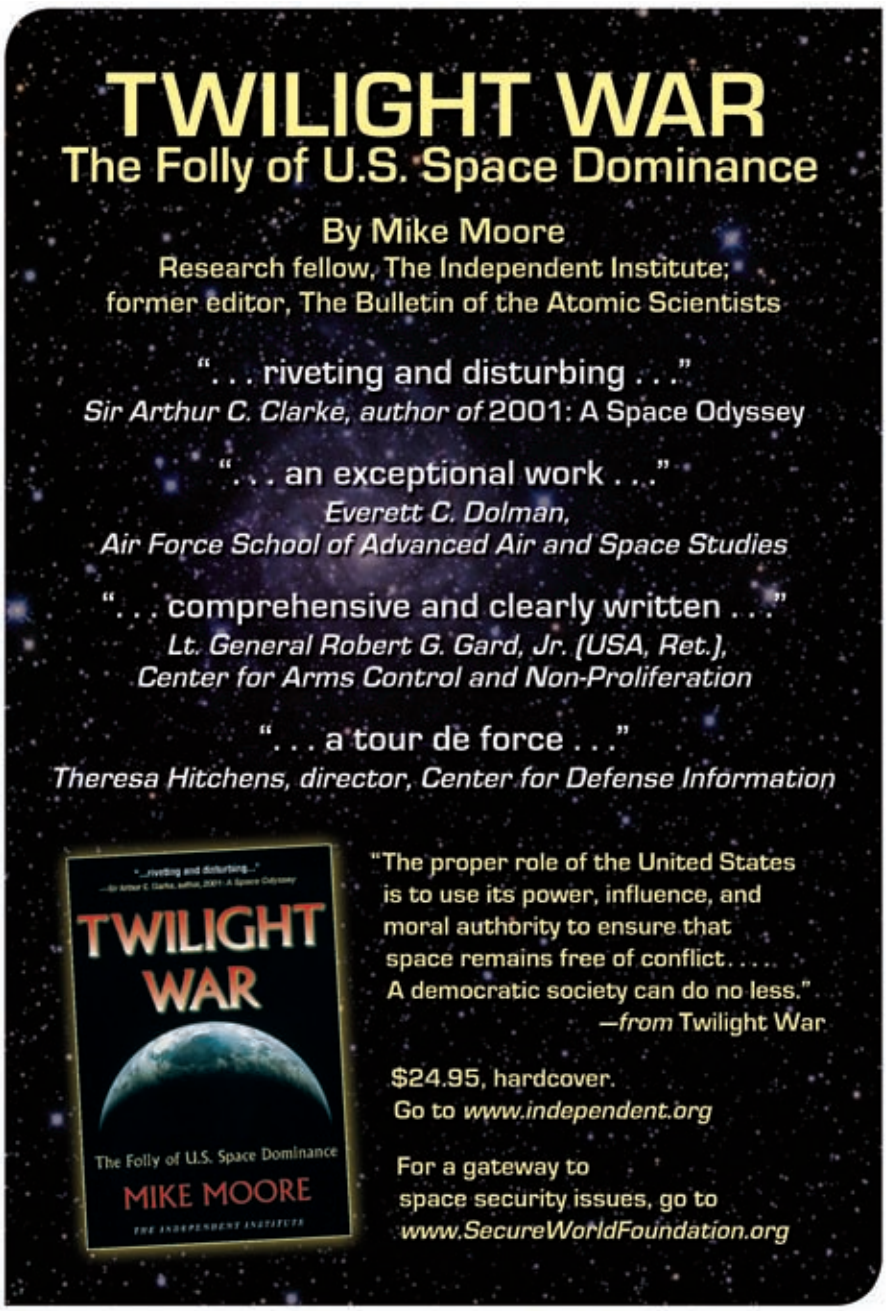
Phillips's focus on the size of the financial sector is not wholly misplaced. Everyone must have noticed that the total sums at risk in the markets for complex derivatives are enormous compared even with the $14 trillion size of the national economy itself. In addition to financing and allocating the uncertainties that arise inevitably out of production and consumption decisions, modern financial engineering creates unlimited opportunities for bets that are only remotely related to productive activity, if at all. A can bet B that C will be unable to meet its obligation to pay D. (A may then try to manipulate the odds by spreading rumors about C's financial condition.)

Should the rest of us care if A and B want to gamble their fool heads off, whether on credit-default swaps or basketball games? If these were private arrangements between consenting (and rich) adults, one might say that it's their business and nobody else's. But in the world as it is, A and B seek leverage—that is, they borrow from banks and others so that they can bet larger amounts than their own private capital would permit. Even a small return on the leveraged bet amounts to a large return on equity. And once the banking system is involved in a big way—owning, and holding as collateral, assets whose likely value is hard to understand and impossible to calculate—then we are all at risk.

For this reason, if things start to unravel, as in the case of securitized subprime mortgages, the whole credit mechanism can freeze up. Banks that do not understand their own balance sheets can hardly expect to understand the balance sheets of potential borrowers. The system can be so paralyzed as it unwinds those leveraged losses that it is unable to perform the financing of "real" economic activity that constitutes its redeeming social value.

The size and the complexity of the financial sector has other consequences, too. It is worth repeating that the most important consequence is the one just mentioned: the danger to the viability of the whole credit mechanism, including the plain-vanilla part that merely finances real capital formation. And since the total volume of bets, and bets on bets, can vastly exceed the amount of underlying "real" activity, and since the fees of those who manage and direct this activity are (roughly) proportional to the gross volume of assets they manage or direct, the hedge-fund operators and others may earn perfectly enormous incomes. (Margaret Blair of the Brookings Institution was one of the first to point this out.) If they are clever enough, and they are, they can arrange their compensation packages so that they batten on profits and are shielded from losses.

Moreover—and this is definitely on Phillips's radar—the fact that big-time financial operators make so much money, and spread enough of it around, gives them a lot of political clout with both


TWILIGHT WAR
The Folly of U.S. Space Dominance
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Research fellow, The Independent Institute;
former editor, The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists
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Sir Arthur C. Clarke, author of 2001: A Space Odyssey
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parties. That is one reason why it will be so difficult to reform the system of financial regulation so as to provide adequate protection for the capital market as it goes about its useful functions. The same fact may also be part of the answer to the churchmouse's question: why does anyone who already has a billion dollars need a second billion? A bigger private jet attracts bigger birds.

Even the better parts of Phillips's book fail to give a serious account of what has happened in the capital market and the channels through which it affects the modern economy. And those parts are interspersed with passages of surpassing ignorance. One chapter is largely given over to an attack on the integrity—not the accuracy but the integrity—of the consumer price index. This would be scurrilous if it were not so silly. Phillips does not seem to understand what a consumer price index is. There is a graph showing that between 2000 and 2006 house prices (which are not included in the CPI) rose much faster than "owners equivalent rent" (which is). This is supposed to demonstrate that the Bureau of Labor Statistics was deliberately suppressing the bad news that ongoing inflation was really much faster than reported.

But asset prices do not belong in a consumer price index. Neither do house prices or land prices or stock prices. If I buy a house today, it would be senseless to count its whole cost as part of my consumption expenditure *this* year. In fact, at about the same time there was much talk, inside and outside the government, of "asset-price inflation" as something distinct from "goods-price inflation" and what should and might be done about it. The fact that house prices were rising faster than rents was quite analogous to a rise in the familiar price-earnings ratio for common stocks.

This is not the only such category mistake in the book. Phillips criticizes National Income and Product Accounts because they do not prominently display figures on the sharply rising volume of private debt. But this lapse is owed to the fact that the National Income and Product Accounts are about, well, national income and product. They are more like an income statement, and certainly not like a balance sheet. There is no reason, of course, why the Department of Commerce should not inform interested citizens about the standing volume of debt, but there is also no reason why the absence of those figures from the accounts should be treated as a dark conspiracy against the public. The debt figures are readily available in other government documents.

Phillips's discussion of "peak oil" is a little better, partly because there are fewer complications to juggle, and partly because he has a point. But it, too, is a little long on foreboding and a little short on clear thinking. "Peak oil" is the catchphrase for the belief that the world's annual production of crude oil has recently reached, or soon will reach, its practical maximum, to be followed by a gradual decline as the best underground reservoirs are depleted. (Production in the "lower forty-eight" U.S. states appears to have peaked in the 1970s.) There are experts on both sides of this technical issue, whose outcome has to depend on what will eventually be found in as-yet-unexplored or poorly explored regions of the world. But it is a convenient hook on which to hang geopolitical drama, and Phillips uses it as such.

Peak oil or no peak oil, the supply-demand balance in the world oil market is clearly shifting: world demand is increasing faster than world supply or availability. *That* is what really matters. The current run-up in price may contain a little speculative froth and some monopolistic maneuvers, but hardly anyone doubts that it reflects a long-term trend in relative scarcity, which is driven primarily by the fast-growing oil-importing economies of Asia (and by the inelasticity of supply). The limit to this trend probably depends more on the timing and the extent of the ultimate availability of alternative (non-oil) sources of energy than on either new discoveries of oil or on induced reductions of demand.

We know how a textbook market economy would allocate scarce supplies of oil. The price would rise to squeeze out the less productive uses of oil until the still-viable demands more or less matched the available supply at that price. The oil would go to those buyers, wherever they were, who could pay the high price and still turn a profit in their own business. Phillips points out that the oil market is not like that now and probably never was. He says that 75 to 80 percent of known reserves are controlled by state-owned national oil companies, in the Middle East, Africa, and elsewhere. These state enterprises are interested in making money. (It would be nice if they all wanted the money to further the economic development of their own countries.) But they exist to serve geopolitical interests as well, and this changes the game. In this world, access to oil is not simply a question of willingness to pay the world price; there is also the small matter of which side you are on.

Phillips has no trouble making the case that American foreign policy—especially, but not only, regarding the Iraq war—has been a costly mistake that will come home to roost in the coming struggle for access to oil. (He also insists that the main purpose of the Iraq war was control of Iraq's oil, but that this will backfire. He could have adapted the cliché: when they say it's not about the oil, it's about the oil.) And he makes much of scattered press reports that China systematically sews up oil deals in Africa, Iran, and elsewhere by linking them to sales of up-to-date military equipment. In the oil-scarce future, in other words, competition for access will be as much geopolitical as economic, and the odds are against the United States, with or without adventurism.

Then—this is a book about bad money, after all—Phillips turns to the dollar, and a certain amount of confusion descends. Some of it rests on the almost universal bad habit of treating the high exchange value of the dollar—a "strong" dollar—as a matter of national pride. "Defending" the dollar sounds a lot like defending Old Glory. Too many secretaries of the treasury, some of whom must have known better, have adopted that mantra, though they have usually refrained from acting on it. Phillips seems to share this error. At one point he describes China's accumulation of foreign-currency reserves, mostly dollars, as giving it "the wherewithal to defend [its] own currency." In a way, exactly the opposite is true: China acquired the dollars in order to "anti-defend" its currency, that is, to prevent its exchange value from rising; and those same treasury secretaries have been urging the Chinese to allow the renminbi (RMB) to strengthen, which is to say, to allow the dollar to weaken against the RMB. The weaker dollar of recent years has promoted the exports that have lately been keeping the American economy afloat. This is all about exports and imports, not about the rockets' red glare.

The foreign-exchange value of the dollar and the world oil market are indeed connected; there is no doubt about that. First and foremost, large American imports of very high-priced oil are a major factor in the large negative trade balance of the United States, currently about

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5 percent of GDP. The rest of the world, especially oil exporters, must continue to acquire dollar assets in order to keep selling more than they buy. (This is the origin of those enormous sovereign wealth funds, almost all of which belong to oil-producing countries.) Phillips is right that, if any economic or geopolitical turn of events were to induce foreign government agencies suddenly to dump their dollar assets in favor of something else, the resulting capital-market and currency disorder would spell trouble for the United States. But it would also spell trouble for them. Foreign governments, including China, own all those dollar assets because doing so is seen to be in their self-interest, not ours. The nagging fear, as Phillips recognizes, is that sovereign motivations extend beyond the narrowly economic: the possibility of geopolitical blackmail, implicit as well as explicit, is not far-fetched. The trouble is, that seems to be all he sees. He misses the complexity.

The other oil-dollar connection comes from the fact that, by informal agreement of long ago, the price of oil is quoted by OPEC in dollars. This has consequences: if the dollar depreciates, as it has done, and nothing else happens, oil exporters find that they are inadvertently selling their oil for less purchasing power. A barrel is worth x dollars, and a dollar buys less goods in general, particularly goods produced outside the United States. In fact, buyers who have euros or yen find that the euro price or yen price of oil has fallen, because a euro or a yen buys more dollars. Naturally, then, the dollar price of oil will rise, as everyone has noticed. (So will the dollar price of many less conspicuous goods, for exactly the same reason.) This is not as big a deal as it may seem. If the price of oil were fixed in euros, as could come to be the case, then a depreciation of the dollar would bring no change in the euro price of oil. But the dollar price would still rise, because it now takes more dollars to buy one euro.

Phillips, however, goes on and on about this matter, because he identifies the role of the dollar as being some sort of index of American masculinity. The United States certainly does gain something from this convention, and it gains even more from the large holdings of dollars in the currency reserves of most countries. The gain may not be negligible, but it is not a major factor. U.S.-based banks probably do more business, and make more profit, than they otherwise would. And the net increase in the world's need to hold dollars functions something like a low-interest loan to the American economy. But if OPEC were to price its oil in terms of some basket of major currencies, which would make sense, nearly all of us would sleep just as well at night.

Phillips's last chapter, grandiosely titled "The Global Crisis of American Capitalism," begins with a burst of overblown prose:

> Looking back a decade, we can now understand that a perverse incarnation of millennial utopianism crested in a form that critics have since labeled "market triumphalism"—the belief that history was "ending" because near perfection had been achieved through the enthronement of English-speaking democratic capitalism. Smugness paraded across a bipartisan spectrum.... To believers, the all-knowing, all-comprehending market hailed by initiates had always been incipient, always evolving toward some ultimate moment when the Dow Jones Industrial Average would cross 10,000 and breathless quantitative strategists at Morgan Stanley (or wherever) would imagine the first synthetic collateralized debt obligation. Millennial utopianism was happy to oblige.

There is, alas, more of such writing. Phillips thinks that this hubristic madness is handing the world economy over from America (and Europe?) to Asia, with incalculable consequences. A more sober view would recognize that the United States could not hope forever to grow faster than the large Asian economies (or eventually others). There is no evidence that God ever intended the United States of America to have a higher per capita income than the rest of the world for eternity. It is true that our failure properly to regulate modern financial engineering, together with the pursuit of a thoughtless and reckless foreign policy, has damaged our economy and weakened our position in the world. Phillips deserves some credit for banging away at this point. It is too bad that he has no taste for genuine analysis. ◆

Benny Morris
THE DARKER SIDE

THE LEGACY OF ISLAMIC ANTISEMITISM: FROM SACRED TEXTS TO SOLEMN HISTORY
Edited by Andrew G. Bostom
(Prometheus Books, 766 pp., $39.95)

ICON OF EVIL: HITLER'S MUFTI AND THE RISE OF RADICAL ISLAM
By David G. Dalin and John F. Rothmann
(Random House, 227 pp., $26)

Scholars in the West have begun to devote time and space to anti-Western jihadism and Muslim anti-Semitism—and a good thing, too, as these are very much on the contemporary international and Middle Eastern political and military agendas and, I fear, will grow in significance during the coming decades, as the Huntingtonian "clash of civilizations" widens. That such a "clash" is going on is all too apparent, from the riots in Nigerian streets, where hundreds died following the announcement of an impending beauty pageant on Nigerian soil, to the murder of an Italian priest in Turkey following the publication of the Muhammad cartoons in Denmark. Yet, Western liberals hesitate to tackle the subject of Muslim anti-Semitism, lest it seem anti-multicultural or provoke the hornet's nest of Allah's minions. Even the use of the word "jihad" has become taboo among appeasers of Islam—and even among some non-appeasers, such as George W. Bush, who, like other Western leaders, refuses to call the phenomenon by its precise name (and the name that its own practitioners use). People speak of "international terrorism" when they should be speaking of "international Muslim (or Islamist) terrorism."

The compendium of anti-Semitic Muslim texts about Jews in Islamic Arab lands assembled by Andrew G. Bostom, a professor of medicine with a dark hobby, kicks off, unusually, with an explanation of the painting reproduced on the dust jacket. It is by Alfred Dehodencq, from 1860, and it portrays a group of Muslims, one of them brandishing a scimitar, handling roughly by her hair a kneeling dark-eyed damsel, her hands tied behind her back. The group, on a raised platform, is surrounded by an apparently enthusiastic mob. The scene is Fez, in Morocco,

Benny Morris's book 1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War was recently published by Yale University Press.

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in 1834. The girl is named Sol Hachuel. She is seventeen years old, and she is about to be beheaded. She was accused of secretly adhering to her Jewish faith after converting to Islam—a charge tantamount to apostasy (still punishable by death in most Arab lands). Hachuel denied that she had ever converted. The governor of Tangier, Arbi Esudio, had accused her of "having provoked the anger of the Prophet." The Sultan agreed and pronounced the death sentence. She went bravely, reiterating her Jewishness and refusing to recant, with "Shema Yisrael," the Judaic profession of faith, on her lips.

The case was certainly unusual—but it typified, in Bostom's view, the sorry lot of the Jews in the Muslim Arab world since the rise of Islam and its expansion around the Mediterranean basin in the seventh and eighth centuries. At the start of his book, Bostom provides a monograph-length background survey of the "theological-juridical origins" of Islamic anti-Semitism, illustrating his points with a brief review of its "historical manifestations." At the level of principle, Muslim attitudes toward the Jews (and, less so, toward Christians) were—and are—informed by a basic ambivalence. Jews and Christians deserved, and received, a formal measure of respect as "People of the Book" and as the first to adopt monotheism; Islam had followed in their footsteps. But at the same time Jews and Christians were the "enemy," the rival religion and, in certain times and places, the political and military foe.

It was this second attitude that dominated actual Arab practice during most of the fourteen centuries since the birth of Islam. In the lands stretching from Persia to Spain and Morocco, Jews (and Christians) were always second-class subjects, humiliated and discriminated against, often oppressed and persecuted, sometimes forcibly converted or slaughtered. There are almost no substantial Jewish or Christian minorities (the Copts of Egypt and the Christians/animists of southern Sudan are exceptions) left in the Arab world today; and the few remaining Christians in Iraq and Palestine are rapidly fleeing westward. (Note the recent murder of the Arab owner of a Christian bookshop in Gaza.)

The story peddled by latter-day Arab propagandists (and reinforced by some Jewish scholars, who tended in decades past, sometimes for apologetic reasons of their own, to highlight the medieval "Golden Age" of Islamic Spanish Jewry)—that the Jewish minorities in the Muslim Arab countries before the advent of Zionism enjoyed a pleasant fraternal existence among the majority populations—has often been trotted out for the benefit of ignorant Westerners, to illustrate Muslim Arab tolerance of minorities and, politically, to promote plans for a multi-ethnic, one-state solution for Israel/Palestine. It also has taken hold among Western intellectuals. Thus as prominent a journalist as Lawrence Wright, in *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*, writes that "until the end of World War II, there was little precedent in Islam for the anti-Semitism that was now warping the politics and society of the region. Jews had lived safely—although submissively—under Muslim rule for 1,200 years, enjoying full religious freedom," until Christian missionaries, Nazi propaganda, and the rise of Israel twisted their minds and propelled them toward anti-Semitism. Or consider Esther Webman, of Tel Aviv University's Dayan Center, who has written that "antisemitism did not exist in the traditional Islamic world.... Antisemitism is, in fact, a relatively new phenomenon in the Arab world." She attributed its rise to three factors: the nineteenth- and twentieth-century penetration of Western thought into that world; "the collapse of traditional political systems and of the loyalties" associated with modern nationalism; and, "most crucial, the development of the conflict [with Zionism] over the domination of Palestine."

But this construct, in Bostom's view (and in my own), is wholly false. It flies in the face of the evidence, much of it presented in Bostom's tome. Certainly modern Christian influences, nationalist enthrallment, and Jewish nationalism (and its success) have added layers to traditional Islamic anti-Semitism. But they were building on firm foundations. From its inception, Islam and its adherents, beginning with Muhammad himself, saw Judaism (and Christianity) as rival parent religions that had to be fought and overcome for Islam to succeed. The initial struggles, in the early seventh century, were existential, a matter of survival, for the Muslims bent on dominating Hijaz and then breaking out of the dismal, arid, thinly populated confines of Arabia. The first Muslims shared a deep sense of vulnerability and threat.

And so the Jews (and Christians) in the realms of expanding Islam were subjected to a regime based on an understanding or agreement—the *dhimma*—of subordination, marginalization, and discrimination. By the twelfth century, the great philosopher Maimonides, a successful Jew in the Islamic world, the doctor to sultans, was to lament: "God has cast us into the midst of this people, the nation of Ishmael, who persecute us severely, and who devise ways to harm us and to debase us.... None has matched [them] in debasing, humiliating, and hating us." And the situation was to remain more or less constant in most of the Islamic lands down to the twentieth century.

Consider Bostom's excerpt from Leon Godard's travelogue *Description et histoire du Maroc,* published in 1860:

> In the cities, the Jews live in separate quarters ... called the Mellah, or the salted earth, dry and cursed. They are locked in from sundown to sunrise and on holidays, all day. They pay the Moorish guards who protect them.... They [pay] the capitulation tax ... that the government sets for each Mellah.... They have eight days to pay the tax; after that, and without warning the Mellah can be pillaged.... According to the laws, the Jews cannot cultivate earth, own land or houses outside the Mellah, ride a horse in front of a town other than on a saddle for a mule ... hit a Moslem, even to defend themselves except in their own house if it has been violated, be a witness in front of a court.... They cannot bid for food in Moslem market, or walk in some streets, in front of Mosques or Koubas, without holding their slippers in their hands, or get married without the permission of the Sultan.... They have to dress only in black or dark colors, wear a black hat different from the turban and not to tie with more than one knot the black scarf holding their headgear.

How and why this condition of degradation came about, and why anti-Semitism persists and, indeed, is on the upsurge in the Islamic Arab world is what Bostom's anthology sets out to explain.

It all begins with the Qur'an—or, rather, with the encounter, as described in the Qur'an, between Muhammad, the prophet of the new religion, and the Jewish tribes in Hijaz, the area of western Arabia that includes the towns of Mecca and Medina, where Islam arose around 620 C.E. The Jews, not surprisingly, rejected the new faith and its prophet; and if the Qur'an is to be believed, they were contemptuous and sarcastic. (Religions notoriously do not take well to humor at their expense.) Indeed, the Qur'an asserts that the Hijazi Jewish tribes were downright hostile, even at one point trying to poison the Prophet. Muhammad,

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for his part, had earlier ordered the assassination of prominent Jewish opponents, and forcibly converted tribesmen and expelled many others, and slaughtered hundreds and consigned many of their women and children to slavery. (He took one of the daughters, Safiya, as his wife, after first dispatching her father and husband, according to the Prophet's first major biographer, Ibn Ishaq.)

Partly in consequence, the Qur'an designates the Jews a "base" people and "killers of prophets" (harking back to the Christian charge of Christ-killing). The full verse (2:61) reads: "Humiliation and wretchedness were stamped upon them, and they were visited with wrath from Allah. That was because they disbelieved in Allah's revelations and slew the prophets wrongfully." They are also said to be usurious. The full verse (4:160–161) reads: "And for the evildoing of the Jews … and for their taking usury … and for their consuming people's wealth under false pretenses we have prepared for the unbelievers among them [i.e., those not converted to Islam] a painful punishment." Elsewhere (5:63–64) the Qur'an states, "They hasten to spread corruption throughout the earth, but Allah does not love corrupters!" and instructs (5:51): "Take not the Jews and the Christians for friends." And it refers (5:60) to Allah's punitive transformation of the Jews into "apes and pigs" (the distant theological basis for Hamas's current designation of the Jews as "sons of apes and pigs").

Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, the current grand imam of Al Azhar University of Cairo, a supreme authority in Sunni Islam, published a book in the late 1960s called *The Jews in the Qur'an and the Traditions*; it was re-issued in 1986. It summarized the Qur'an's (and Tantawi's own) attitude to the Jews in this way: "The Qur'an describes the Jews with their own particular degenerate characteristics, i.e., killing the prophets of Allah, corrupting His words by putting them in the wrong places, consuming the people's wealth frivolously, refusal to distance themselves from the evil they do, and other ugly characteristics caused by their deep-rooted lasciviousness … only a minority of Jews keep their word.… [But] not all Jews are the same. The good ones become Muslims." Tantawi was later to describe contemporary Jews as "the descendants of apes and pigs." I add in fairness that he was later to condemn the September 11 attacks, and suicide bombings in general, as contrary to Islam, though he defended "jihad" against those violating Islamic soil.

The hadiths, or sayings of the Prophet, the subsequent exegeses of the Qur'an, and the early biographers of Muhammad built on and built up this anti-Semitic tradition. Ibn Ishaq (died 761), Muhammad's first and major biographer, as transmitted by Ibn Hisham, wrote: "The Apostle of Allah—may Allah bless him and grant him peace—declared, 'Kill any Jew who falls into your power.' So Muhayyisa Ibn Mas'ud fell upon Ibn Sunayna, one of the Jewish merchants with whom his family had social and commercial relations, and killed him." One of the more famous hadiths, quoted in Bostom, from Sahih Muslim, Book 41, no. 6985, reads: "Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: The last hour would not come unless the Muslims will fight against the Jews and the Muslims would kill them until the Jews would hide themselves behind a stone or a tree and a stone or a tree would say: Muslim, or the servant of Allah, there is a Jew behind me: come and kill him: but the tree Gharqad would not say [this], for it is the tree of the Jews." This hadith appears in variants in different collections.

Major Muslim scholars followed this anti-Semitic tradition. Al Baydawi (1286–1316?), a Shafi'ite intellectual who was chief kadi of Shiraz, wrote of the Jews' "intense obstinacy, multi-faceted disbelief, and their addiction to following their whims, their adherence to the blind following of their tradition, their distancing themselves from the truth, and their unrelenting denial of, and hostility toward, the prophets." Ibn Kathir (1300–1373), a Basra-born historian, wrote of the Jews' "rebellion, defiance, opposing the truth, belittling other people, and degrading the scholars. This is why the Jews—may Allah's continued curses descend on them until the Day of Resurrection—killed many of their Prophets." And in our own time—he is a full-fledged member of this odious tradition—Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), the "spiritual mentor" of modern Islamist extremism, wrote: "No other nation has shown more intransigence and obstinacy than the Jews. They viciously and mercilessly killed and mutilated a number of prophets and messengers. They have over the centuries displayed the most extreme attitudes towards God.… They have always boasted of their virtue and made the implausible claims of being … the chosen people of God.… Such claims are totally refuted by the Qur'an.… Theirs is a wicked nature, which is full of hatred for Islam."

It is little wonder, then, that such anti-Semitic motifs creep into the speeches of contemporary Muslim leaders. Bashar Al Assad, the president of Syria, welcomed Pope John Paul II to Damascus on May 5, 2001 by declaring that "we notice them [the Jews] aggressing against Muslim and Christian holy sites in Palestine.… They try to kill all the the principles of divine faiths with the same mentality of betraying Jesus Christ and torturing him, and in the same way that they tried to commit treachery against Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him)." Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, described the survivors of the Holocaust as "a bunch of hooligans who emigrated to Palestine," while his protégé Mahmoud Ahmadinejad denies that the Holocaust took place at all. Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah in Lebanon, has written: "If we searched the entire world for a person more cowardly, despicable, weak and feeble in psyche, mind, ideology and religion, we would not find anyone like the Jew. Notice, I do not say the Israeli.… If they [the Jews] all gather in Israel, it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide."

But contemporary Muslim anti-Semitism, as typified by such statements, is not all of Qur'anic derivation. It also owes a great deal to modern European hate-merchants. Without doubt, Christian missionaries, traders, and officials in the nineteenth and early twentieth century flooded the region with their religious-ideological wares. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, for example, was first translated into Arabic and published in Cairo in 1920. And more modern European anti-Semitic tenets penetrated the area during the following decades. They were perfectly embodied in the person and beliefs of Haj Muhammad Amin Al Husseini.

In her book *The One-State Solution: A Breakthrough for Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Deadlock*, the American scholar Virginia Tilley recently wrote that "the racist … incompetent and reactionary Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini" was "unrepresentative" of the Palestinian Arabs. Tilley would have her readers believe that Husseini "was never a leader of more than a few reactionary Palestinian factions." This is nonsense. In this respect, at least, David G. Dalin and John F. Rothmann put matters aright. From his appointment in 1921 by the British as the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Husseini was a major figure, and during the 1930s and 1940s he was the recognized leader—recognized, that is, by the British Mandate authorities and the Zionist leadership and, not least, by the leaders of the surrounding Arab societies and states—

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of the Palestinian Arab national movement, much as Yasser Arafat was the leader of the movement from the late 1960s until his death in 2004. And like Arafat, Husseini basked in the support of the Palestinian multitudes, led them into a series of historical disasters, and—when all is said and done—rejected a succession of compromises that would have resulted in the establishment many years ago of an Arab state, alongside Israel, in part of Palestine.

Husseini, who died in 1974, had an eventful life in interesting times. His father, Taher Al Husseini, the mufti of Jerusalem from 1869 until 1908, led the Palestinian notables' unsuccessful struggle against Jewish immigration and land purchases (while his cousin, Rabah Al Husseini, sold land, including his own house, to the Jews). Haj Amin seems to have been born in 1895 (he sometimes spoke of 1894 or 1896) and grew up in Jerusalem. When he was seventeen, he was sent to study in Cairo, where he caught the eye of Rashid Rida, the theologian who became the spiritual father figure of the Muslim Brotherhood, established in the late 1920s. According to the anti-Zionist historian Ilan Pappe, Rida, who treated the young Amin as a disciple, believed "in the need for Muslim society . . . to regard the encounter with Western culture . . . as an existential threat. [His] second principle related to the way [the Islamic Arab world] needed to deal with this encounter—a return to [implementing] a pure version of the Islamic commandments, all the while strenuously filtering out western influences. . . . A third principle touched on the need to link religious activity to political and nationalist actions. The struggle against the British occupation of Egypt, for example, was nothing but the struggle of Islam against the West. Rida spoke explicitly also about Zionism and the need to fight it within the framework of the overall struggle against the West's takeover of the Arab, Islamic Middle East."

All these principles were shared by Husseini. He joined the Ottoman Army, apparently even before Istanbul declared war, "as he was bored at school" (in Pappe's phrase), and served as an officer until the end of 1916. He fell ill and returned to Jerusalem, and there, after deserting, he began surreptitiously to raise volunteers to aid the anti-Ottoman Sharifian "revolt in the desert," organized by the British in 1915–1916. Later he assisted the short-lived government of Faisal ibn Hussein in Damascus during 1918–1920, and then he returned to Palestine and dabbled in embryonic Palestinian nationalist politics.

Husseini apparently played an incendiary role in the Nabi Musa riots against the Jews in 1920, after which he fled the country. But he was pardoned, and he returned, and in a supreme gesture of appeasement, Herbert Samuel, the first British high commissioner, appointed him the "grand mufti" of Jerusalem. The following year Samuel appointed him the head of the Supreme Muslim Council, which supervised the country's Muslim sites and institutions, thereby furnishing Hajj Amin with a powerful political base for his eventual accession to the leadership of the Palestinian Arab national movement.

He detested the British and all their works—he was especially angered, of course, by their support of Zionism—but he was an accomplished dissembler, and he played his double game to the hilt. When not out rabble-rousing—he was a charismatic public speaker—Husseini was "always mild-mannered and soft-spoken." He was "short and stocky" and "dressed simply but elegantly," write Dalin and Rothmann. "He always wore the same black patent-leather shoes and the traditional . . . mufti's headdress—a large white cloth wrapped, in a turban, around a red tarboosh. . . . People who met him for the first time were surprised by his gentle, even meek, manner." With his fair skin, pale blue eyes, and reddish brown beard, he had a "non-Muslim, truly Western appearance." (Hitler was also to remark upon this, hinting at the mufti's "Aryan origins" when they met in Berlin in November 1941.)

In the tumultuous years between 1936 and 1939, Husseini led the Palestine Arabs during the anti-British "Great Revolt." Publicly, on the political level, he oversaw the general strike of May–October 1936, while clandestinely he orchestrated, or tried to orchestrate, its military—guerrilla and terroristic—aspect, with armed bands roaming the countryside and the casbahs, killing British soldiers, Jewish settlers, and dissident Arabs. In October 1937, with a warrant out for his arrest, Husseini hid in Al Aksa Mosque on the Temple Mount and then, dressed as a woman, he fled by boat to Lebanon. From then on, he lived out his life in exile, "returning" to Palestine only for one week in September 1948 before the Egyptian secret police shepherded him back to his villa in Heliopolis. Before that time he had rejected the U.N. General Assembly partition resolution of November 29, 1947 and launched the Palestinian Arab assault on the Yishuv, the Jewish community in Palestine, which was the first stage of the 1948 war.

When the Haganah, the Yishuv's main militia, crushed the Palestinian irregulars in the spring of 1948, Husseini successfully prodded the neighboring Arab states to invade, and to attempt to destroy, the new Jewish state and to "save" the Palestinians. The Arab armies failed, but the Jordanians duly acquired the West Bank and East Jerusalem, as the Egyptians did the Gaza Strip—and pointedly avoided establishing a Palestine Arab state. So Husseini lived out the rest of his life in Lebanon and Egypt, an embittered and discarded figurehead, in exile among his Arab brothers, like the other 700,000 Palestinians displaced in the war that he had immorally and illogically launched, and for which his people, and the Arab peoples in general, had failed to prepare.

Strangely enough, Dalin and Rothmann devote little space to the chronicle of Husseini's life. They prefer to dwell on Husseini's anti-Semitism and his ideological and political links with the Nazis and the Third Reich. The problem is that, while putting their finger on important affinities, they decidedly over-reach, and, given the poverty of their scholarship, they often fail to persuade, leaving the reader with the bad taste of propaganda. They certainly add little to the story published in Joseph Schechtman's *The Mufti and the Führer* (1965), Zvi Elpeleg's *The Grand Mufti* (1993), or Jennie Lebel's *Haj Amin and Berlin* (1996).

To be sure, Haj Amin was an anti-Semite. He certainly imbibed the Judeophobia of the Qur'an. And this, as Dalin and Rothmann assert, may have been bolstered by a further dose of Jew-hatred that he acquired at the feet of Rashid Rida (though they offer no proof of this). His anti-Semitism was certainly reinforced by what he picked up during his years in Germany, between 1941 and 1945, when he was employed by the Third Reich to broadcast jihadist anti-Allied propaganda to the Arab world and to recruit Muslims for the Wehrmacht in Bosnia, while the Nazis, as they described it, were battling "international Jewry" and its agents in London, Washington, and Moscow. Husseini seems to have accepted the Nazi view of the Jews' world-embracing powers—something that is entirely lacking in Qur'anic and early Islamic anti-Semitism, which, if anything, belittled the Jew.

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Husseini's anti-Semitism was not simply utilitarian and political, a means of raising the alarm about the Jews' alleged aim of taking over the Temple Mount or Palestine. It was sincere and heartfelt. In 1954, he wrote in the Egyptian newspaper *Al Masri* that "the Jews filled a central role in acts of sabotage and destructive propaganda inside Germany, toward the end of the [first] world war. They acted in every way to bring about its destruction." The Jews aimed to take over Palestine, "Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq (apart from its northern parts), Sinai, the [Nile] Delta of Egypt, the city of Medina and the areas of the Banu Kurtina and Banu al-Nasir around it, and other parts of northern Hijaz [today western Saudi Arabia]." He further declared that

> we have a negative ally of great importance, and that is the Jewish nature, which characterizes them since their beginnings. This nature was among the important reasons for their failure in all stages of their history, and caused people to hate and persecute them. One of the most salient features of the Jewish nature is their conceit and exaggerated selfishness, which stems from [their belief that] they are the chosen people of God. There is no limit to their covetousness and to their keeping others away from the Good.... They have no pity in their hearts and they are known for their hostility, rivalry and great hardness, as Allah described them in the Qur'an.... This caused them ... not to recognize others' rights. As a result, other peoples have despaired of living with them throughout history.

So Husseini's support of the pro-Axis rebellion of Rashid Ali Al Kilani in Baghdad in April 1941 was unsurprising—as unsurprising, in fact, as his subsequent extended sojourn in Berlin. He became a friend of Himmler's, and appears to have known the full extent of the Holocaust. Indeed, in various indirect ways he abetted the murder of European Jewry. In the summer of 1943, for example, Husseini wrote a series of letters to von Ribbentrop, Himmler, and various leaders in Nazi "puppet states" requesting that Jewish orphans be sent to Poland, where they would not be "a source of danger," rather than to Palestine. On May 6, 1943, he wrote to the foreign minister of Bulgaria of "the Jewish danger to the whole world, especially to countries in which there were Jews." On May 13, he wrote to von Ribbentrop complaining that 4,000 Balkan Jewish children had been saved.

ANTHONY RUSSO

After the war, evading prosecution as a war criminal, Husseini settled in Cairo. From there, as the dominant figure behind the resurrected Arab Higher Committee, he pulled, or tried to pull, the strings in Palestine and around it, in the hope of frustrating the implementation of the U.N. partition resolution and the establishment of the Jewish state. He failed, and led his people into the Nakba; and then blamed everyone else—the Jews, the Americans, the British, the Soviets—for what had happened. Decades later, Arafat performed similarly—though to be sure, unlike Husseini, he managed through the Oslo peace process to eke out some areas of limited sovereignty for his people. (What they have managed to do with these areas is another matter.)

Husseini, of course, was not alone in the Arab world in his support of the Germans. Such support was quite widespread. The question always arises whether it was motivated merely by anti-imperialism and the hope that a German defeat of the Western democracies would free the Arabs from the imperial grip of the French and the British, or whether it went beyond interests to beliefs, to an identification with parts of the fascist and Nazi message, which was anti-democratic, anti-Semitic, and anti-liberal. In Husseini's case, there seem to have been both ideological affinities and a large dose of political pragmatism (a German victory might ensure Palestinian Arab independence from Britain, the elimination of the Yishuv, and perhaps his own sway over Palestine).

Dalin and Rothmann are correct to note that already in March 1933 Husseini had congratulated the Nazis on their accession to power, and told Heinrich Wolff, the German consul-general in Jerusalem, that he hoped that the fascist governmental system would spread to other countries. Early on, he had called on Germany to impose an economic boycott against the Jews and said that the Islamic world would join it. At his famous meeting with Hitler on November 28, 1941, Husseini—according to his own memoirs—asserted their ideological affinity, when it came to anti-Semitism, in the following manner: "Our fundamental condition for cooperating with Germany was a free hand to eradicate every last Jew from Palestine and the Arab world. I asked Hitler for an explicit undertaking to allow us to solve the Jewish problem in a manner befitting our national and racial aspirations and according to the scientific methods innovated by Germany in the handling of its Jews. The answer I got was: 'The Jews are yours.'"

Bostom's book is important and deeply discouraging, but it suffers from flaws of organization and analysis. It is eclectic and chaotic; much is missing, even as there is too much repetition. In some ways the historical picture is even worse than he portrays it as being. He includes documents referring to the Farhud—the Iraqi pogrom against Baghdad's Jews in 1941—and the massacre of the Jews in Tripolitania in 1945; but there is no mention of the massacres of Jews in Aden in 1947 and Morocco in 1948, and there is almost no material (since he purports to cover the medieval centuries as well) on the vast pogroms that took place in Spain and North Africa during the Middle Ages. The volume is clearly not a product of systematic research or compilation. The mixing of excerpts from medieval Islamic texts with articles by modern Western scholars of Islam is somewhat confusing (especially when these scholars abundantly quote from the earlier material); it is not always clear where the one begins and the other ends.

Dalin and Rothmann suffer not from pedantry but from overtly propagandistic aims. They are constantly beating an ideological drum. Their adjectives are a giveaway. Every anti-Semite or anti-Semitic text is "virulent" or "notorious." *Icon of Evil* even offers a what-if chapter, an obscene counterfactual fantasy called "The Mufti's Reflection: What If Germany Had Conquered Palestine and Britain?," in which the Yishuv is exterminated, Husseini serves as Hitler's local satrap, and so on. Sure. What does this add to the reader's knowledge? And the book abounds with errors of fact. The Paris peace conference after World War I did not "ratify" the Sykes-Picot Agreement, "stipulating that Palestine would be ruled by the British," and T. E. Lawrence was not "the ... British representative in the region"; no one "estimated the Egyptian army [in 1948] at two hundred thousand men"; Lebanese Prime Minister Riad Al Solh was not assassinated on July 15, 1951; and so on. But if Dalin and Rothmann's book is a bad book, much of what it says is soberingly truthful and to the point. We are no longer living in a world, if ever we did, in which these ugly realities can be explained away or ignored. ◆

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Washington Diarist

Accommodationism

One of the most troublesome qualities of reason is that it is not always reasonable. The man of reason is committed to follow only where deliberation leads, but the reasonable man has other commitments. His rationality answers to more than itself. Reasonableness is an acknowledgment of the social setting in which reason, even in its most private exercise, does its work. It introduces into the activity of reason an extrarational consideration—the desire for agreement, the aspiration to consensus. That is why the concept of reasonableness figures conspicuously in law and political philosophy, which are always searching for the grounds of cooperation, for society's grease. Reasonableness is warm and welcoming, as in Prospero's assurance that "the approaching tide will shortly fill the reasonable shores." It is a virtue as much it is a method. Its conclusions must be not only true but also broadly acceptable, and therefore moderate and even practical. But not so reason. It is extreme, even when its conclusions are not. It owes its integrity in part to its insularity, its indifference. That is why tyrants always fear it—because it, too, is sovereign. Reasonableness, by contrast, is the beginning of the end of dissidence. In an unjust society, after all, agreement may be acquiescence, and cooperation may be collaboration. The bad guys are counting on the victory of reasonableness over reason. But the dissident, I mean the genuine one, is the unreasonable man of reason.

Or so he used to be. But the ideal of inflexibility is buckling. It enjoys scant prestige in a technological time, in which the smartest analysis of anything is the analysis of how it works. In the gaming view of life, you do not refuse to play. (The refusal to play is just the dumbest way to lose.) How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Praxis, praxis. But I am being too general. The degradation of dissidence that I have in mind is taking place in China, notwithstanding the many counter-examples of heroism, such as the blogger Hu Jia. Consider the case of Zhang Yimou. Not long ago he was China's great dissident film director. Last week he directed the dazzling fascist spectacle at the opening of the Olympics in Beijing. Raise the red lantern, indeed. They censored him and banned him and did what they could to deprive him of honor abroad, and then they invited him to dine, and he came. "One reality of a rising China," *The New York Times* reported, "[is that] many leading artists now work with, or at least not against, the ruling Communist Party." A famous Beijing artist explained that "people really are selling their talent in a way that can make them money." As in everything else, China is breaking new ground in the sell-out of high culture. It almost makes you feel a pang of pity for Brezhnev: was the Soviet Union broken only because it was broke? Yet somehow I doubt that Paradjanov could have been bought, or Brodsky, or Sinyavsky, or Bukovsky. The mere mention of their names remoralizes the discussion.

Consider also the case of the Dalai Lama. A few weeks ago he allowed to Nicholas Kristof of his "willingness to deal. … For the first time, the Dalai Lama is willing to state that he can accept the socialist system in Tibet under Communist Party rule." His Holiness averred that "the main thing is to preserve our culture, to preserve the character of Tibet. … That is what is most important, not politics." Here I must declare my own shortcoming. I have always found the Dalai Lama, his smiles and his simplicities, risible. His worldly unworldliness makes me cringe. And I have never understood why the restoration of theocracy in Tibet is a proper passion for liberals. Last spring Kristof's column floated an early version of the truce with tyranny: "The Dalai Lama would return to Tibet as a spiritual leader, and Tibetans would be permitted to possess his picture and revere him, while he would unequivocally accept Chinese sovereignty." His picture! This is the stuff of which classical anti-clericalism was rightly made. In my unilluminated state I have been under the impression that the cause of Tibet is the cause of freedom—and not just religious freedom, which is not the only kind of freedom that matters. I cannot restrain the suspicion that what we have here are the consequences for politics of the Buddhist doctrine of equanimity. Zhang Yimou also asserts that "I have no interest in politics." I appreciate the magnitude of the obstacles that stand in the way of freedom in China, but gentlemen, you are fools. Politics is your only hope—for your art, your religion, your country. Your renunciation of politics is precisely Hu Jintao's plan. From political liberty other liberties flow. About this you must, please, be unreasonable.

The fashion in accommodationism may be found here at home, too. I am not referring only to the mad stigmatization of every change of mind as "flip-flopping." Uncompromising is not the same as unthinking, though hypocrisy is more galling when it is preceded by holiness. Barack Obama is tacking—I mean growing intellectually—the way all high-stakes politicians tack. But his statement on the Georgian crisis alarmed me, because it exposed his belief in the plasticity of things. The nice thing about Abkhazia and South Ossetia is that almost nobody knows almost anything about them, so that one's first response reveals not an analysis but an inclination. Obama "condemn[ed] the outbreak of violence in Georgia," as if it happened on its own, and called on Georgia and Russia "to show restraint," as if Georgia should have restrained itself from being invaded, and summoned "all sides [to] enter into direct talks on behalf of stability in Georgia." There was no anger on our friends' behalf: Obama is too fine for outrage. It was the voice of sweet reason, and spoken like an umpire, or an international civil servant. (At least he did not allude to *les forces de paix russes*.) The larger question is Obama's attitude to conflict. He seems to view it as an aberration, an error, a misunderstanding, and therefore to regard it as an opportunity for arbitration, which is to say, as generally tractable. Diplomacy for him is more than an instrument, it is a mentality. Last winter the *Times* ran a devastating study of an extended negotiation that Obama conducted as a state senator with a nuclear polluter called Exelon, in which he was outplayed by, well, the assholes and his flexibility came to nothing. No, I am not looking for a Heraclitean tough guy in the White House for whom war is the father and king of all; but a little reason of the unsweet kind would go a long way.

Leon Wieseltier

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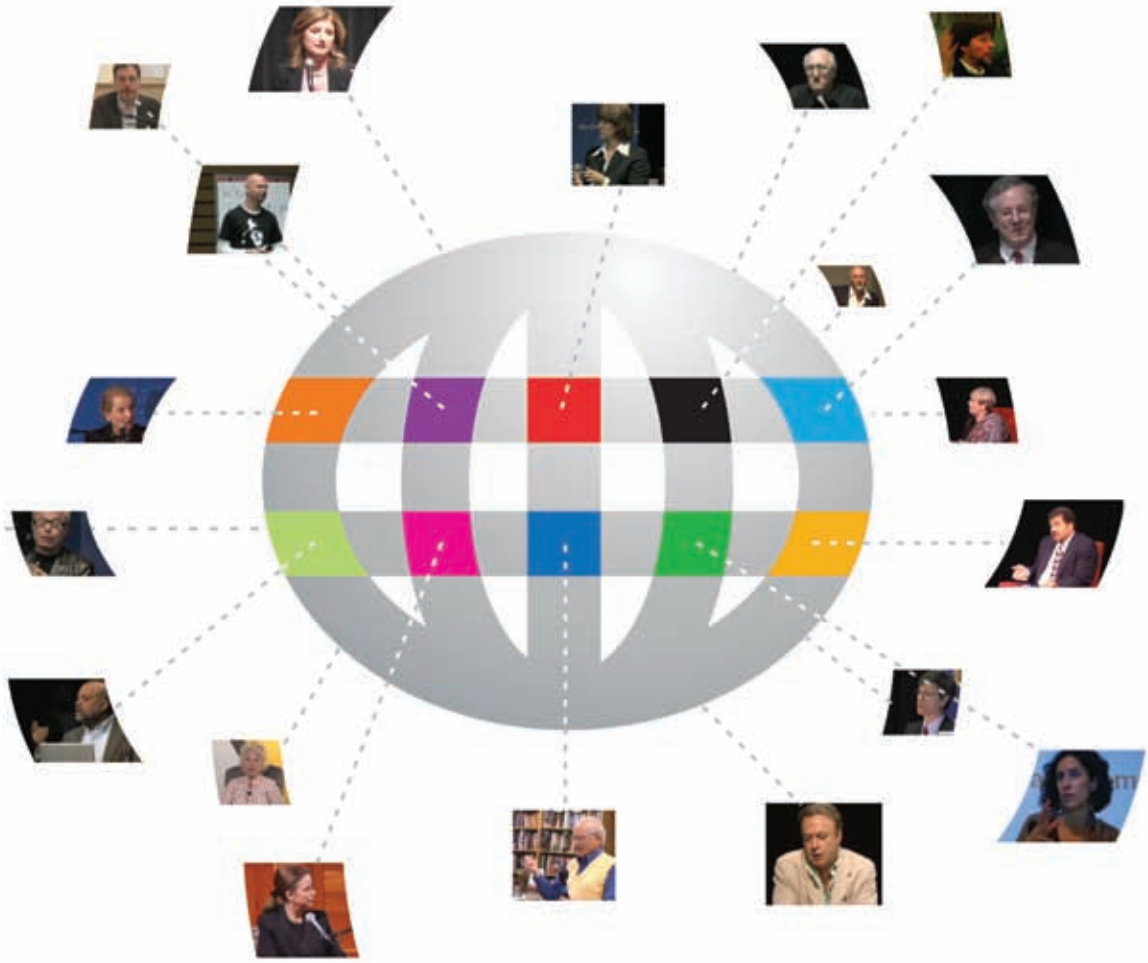

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Dark Tsar

JUST WHEN WE THOUGHT we were out, they pull us back in. The Russian invasion of Georgia marks an end to American illusions about the obsolescence of the old world of great powers and their ruthless competition. The attacks of September 11 did not have the effect of a return to grand strategy: Our new enemies were without states and without armies, and in their ideas and their methods were unconventional enough to leave undisturbed our millennial sensation of a post–cold war, and maybe even post-Westphalian, world. Al Qaeda was a millennially appropriate foe. Its organization and its ideology were themselves globalized; they seemed to confirm the excitement about globalization by revealing its dark side. But Vladimir Putin and his strategic paranoia and his sphere-of-influence thinking and his autocratic militarism: All this was supposed to be archaic by now. According to the canonical narrative of the grand historical novelty of our era, geo-economics was supposed to have usurped geo-strategy. We thought we were out. But here we are.

In the aftermath of the cold war, we heard a lot about "unipolarity." This was not quite as delusional as "the end of history," but there was no reason to believe that it would accurately describe the planet for long. The United States certainly won the cold war, but the world does not stand still. Whether or not the United States is "the only superpower" now, there are other superpowers on, or just this side of, the horizon. That is what Putin wants us to understand, and he is right. In its region and beyond, Russia is choosing to inherit many of the policies of the Soviet Union, which had chosen to inherit many of the policies of Russia.

The crisis in Georgia strikes yet another blow against the myth of a wholly new world. It reminds us of the persistence of ethnic allegiances even into the age of connectivity. The new connectivity will not retire the old connectedness. Georgia's stupid provocation in South Ossetia was a way of allowing local tribalisms to play into Russia's prior strategic designs. And when Putin sent his tanks across his borders he had the Balkans in mind—specifically the independence of Kosovo, which Russia continues to regard as a historical humiliation. The Georgian experiment in recent years consisted precisely in the attempt to pit democracy against tribalism; but it was an imperfect attempt, not always conducted in good faith. And now in South Ossetia there are reports of the ethnic cleansing of Georgians. The hand of the past is more deadly than dead.

As a consequence of our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and of our wanton energy policy, it is not at all clear what we can do to evict Russia from Georgia, or to persuade Russia to revise its historical and strategic thinking. But what we must take pains to do now is to be clear in our own understanding of the situation. In the coming bi- or tri-polar world, our pole is the free pole, the democratic pole—to be more concrete, the Polish pole, and that of all the other states along Russia's borders that aspire to an open society and an alliance with other open societies. It was stirring to see the presidents of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia rush to Tbilisi to stand with the president of Georgia.

American statecraft has been returned to hellish complexity. We will have to propagate our values and protect our interests in a world with many moving and dangerous parts, and our leaders better have the brains and nerves for it. The next American president will be a foreign policy president whether he likes it or not. ◆

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If foreign oil has us over a barrel now, what happens when our population increases by another 100 million?

As rising fuel prices put renewed pressure on family budgets, many worry price increases will continue. Some recall the mile-long gas lines years ago when Americans had to compete for a share of dwindling energy supplies. With America's population at a record 300 million today, supplies are again tight in spite of record high prices. And the U.S. Census Bureau projects that another 110 million people will be added to our population between 2000 and 2040*. What will happen to energy prices then? Not to mention food and other resources. Fortunately, there is some hope. Americans are already consuming less. Alternative fuel sources are now being vigorously pursued. And another major leap in population is avoidable if we all work together. According to the Pew Hispanic Research Center, 82% of America's projected population increase between 2005 and 2050 will result from immigration. If we can continue reducing our energy consumption, begin leveraging alternative fuels and agree on a reasonable plan to reduce immigration, we may be able to reduce the threat of even higher prices tomorrow. Aren't we all tired of foreign interests having us over a barrel?

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300 million people today, 400 million in just 30 years. Think about it.

American Immigration Control Foundation	Californians for Population Stabilization	Federation for American Immigration Reform	NumbersUSA	Social Contract Press
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*Based on U.S. Census Bureau projection, 2004

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Road Trip

The bromantic comedy that is John and Lindsey.

Traveling with any presidential campaign is exhausting. But it may be most exhausting to hit the road as a buddy of John McCain, because, along with forgoing sleep, you become a chief victim of McCain's unrelenting and often peculiar avidities. Giant pigs, for one.

On a recent Wednesday, waiting to board a flight to Savannah for a McCain event headlined by his surrogate Senator Lindsey Graham, I came across Graham himself, sitting entourageless near the gate, his legs curled up on his seat, a lick of gray-brown hair disordered by the previous night's hotel pillow sticking up from the back of his head, glumly rifling through copies of *Newsweek* and *People* and looking so weary I didn't recognize him at first. It turned out Graham's bedraggled condition was, in part, the result of having endured three flights in 24 hours to accompany McCain to a nuclear-plant photo-op in Detroit and a tele–town hall in West Virginia. On top of that, there was the emotional wear incurred from McCain's pestering him over a pig.

"John is so excited about the big pig," Graham explains, slumping in his airport chair and rolling his eyes. "He wanted me to see the pig." The pig in question is Freight Train, the Iowa State Fair's 1,259-pound prize-winning hog, whose immense hillocks of back fat constitute a boyish fixation for the Republican nominee. Graham couldn't make it to Iowa this year, but McCain was loath to stop playing with him: " 'Just come out!' " Graham croaks, squaring his shoulders and turning his voice into a rasp to imitate McCain's. "He is *mesmerized* by that pig."

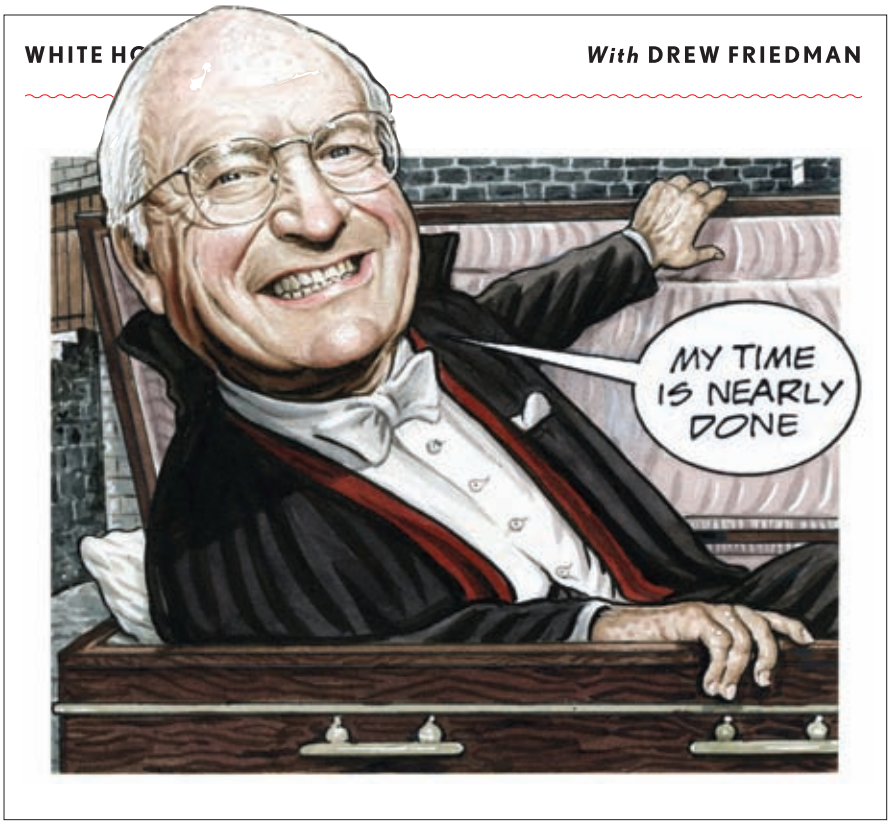
★ ★ ★

For Eve Fairbanks's Dispatches from the Convention, Go to TNR.com

Before Freight Train captured McCain's enthusiasm, it was bird-watching. "They ought to take all the detainees at Gitmo, round them up, and make them listen to John talk about birds for a week," Graham complains of their epic sessions with bird guidebooks at McCain's ranch in Sedona, Arizona. "John gets so obsessed with things, and if you're his buddy, you pay."

Not every U.S. senator who advises the GOP's presidential nominee on Iraq policy gets to see the side of McCain that likes to run after animals. But the 53-year-old Graham has a special place in McCain's campaign: top surrogate, but also inseparable foil. Graham has not only gone on—in the past month alone—CNN, "Face the Nation," "Hannity & Colmes," "Today," and "Fox News Sunday" to press the McCain campaign's tactical interests, but he also talks with McCain on the phone about three times a day, oftentimes just to say hi. En route to Savannah (a rare trip away from McCain's side), Graham managed to squeeze in a short call between wheels-down and deplaning. Walking down the jetway after the flight, he waved to me, smiled, and held up his cell phone: "That was John, right there!"

It's unusual for a presidential candidate to have an honest-to-goodness sidekick, but then again, McCain is sort of a Pied Piper for protégés. While most politicians collect allies, McCain collects followers: There's ex-aide John Weaver, who still helps McCain long



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after being officially dumped; speechwriter Mark Salter, who reveres McCain as a father figure; and fellow POW Orson Swindle, who adoringly follows McCain around on the campaign trail. These intensely devoted mentees seem to look to McCain less to bring momentum to their careers than to bring meaning to their lives. But Graham is different from all the other worshippers—and more important.

Journalists often present Graham as subordinate to McCain—Tom Ricks, of *The Washington Post*, called him McCain's "mini-me"—but it was actually McCain who made the first move in their relationship. "I like to think it was my charm," Graham says, "but I think it was my demographic." The year was 1998, McCain wanted to run for president, and Graham happened to be a feisty, up-and-coming young congressman from the crucial state of South Carolina. They became acquainted during Bill Clinton's impeachment trial, where Graham was pumping up his reputation as a right-wing attack dog. Shortly after, McCain invited Graham to his office and asked him to join his nascent campaign. Graham co-chaired McCain's 2000 effort in the Palmetto State, and, two years later, their friendship really clicked during a trip they took together to the Munich Conference on Security Policy. McCain was "very good at making sure foreign leaders knew who I was," Graham remembers.

When Graham moved up to the Senate in 2003, he quickly shrugged off his former party-line conservatism to create, with McCain, a maverick duo that reveled in pulling off joint feats of political derring-do. "I'd say [to McCain], 'Why am I doing this?' " relates Graham. "He says"—he squares his shoulders again and breaks into the McCain rasp—" 'Ehhh … It'll be fun!' " Graham and McCain bashed the military's treatment of Iraqi detainees, anchored the bipartisan "Gang of 14" that broke the judicial nominations fight, and, in the summer of 2005, flew to Alaska with Hillary Clinton to decry man-made global warming. After President Bush phoned Graham and asked him to help push McCain's moderate positions during last year's immigration-bill negotiations on the Hill (the Arizonan was too busy campaigning to be of much use), Graham himself became so passionate about a compromise that he lambasted its conservative opponents as "bigots." The ensuing fallout only brought him and McCain closer. "I feel like I've been through war with McCain," Graham explains. "That bonds you."

The two have, in fact, gotten so close that Graham has essentially been inducted into McCain's family. He is an ever-present guest at the Sedona ranch (where he sometimes takes McCain's youngest daughter Bridget's mermaid-themed bedroom) and a companion on trips and holidays. During a trip to London with the McCains in March, he and McCain's son Jimmy took Bridget to a Jack-the-Ripper-themed attraction, where Graham coined his own nickname for her: "Bridget the Brave." This past Memorial Day, McCain, his wife Cindy, Bridget, and Graham all watched the latest *Indiana Jones* in the theater. The Fourth of July found McCain, his son Jack, and Graham shooting at tennis balls together in the Arizona desert.

It's easy to think of Graham—a bachelor orphaned in college—as yet another surrogate son to McCain, who, with seven children, 22 pets, and a gaggle of aide-acolytes vying for his love, obviously has something of a compulsion for parenting. But, unlike Jack or Jimmy or John Weaver, Graham also has a highly scripted part to play in McCain's public shtick, less filial than farcical. In a typical McCain stump speech, the candidate begins by graciously thanking his local hosts, then pauses, grins, looks around, and quips, "I know that

MCCAIN: RICK WILKING/REUTERS/LANDOV; GRAHAM: MANDEL NGAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES/NEWSCOM

Lou Beach

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little jerk Lindsey Graham is around here somewhere."

McCain publicly pokes fun at Graham for being a lawyer, for falling over when they visited the Western Wall in Jerusalem, for dining at the Olive Garden. Graham's proletarian eating habits are a particular source of amusement. "The only reason why Senator Graham is with us is because he gets free meals from time to time," McCain recently told a group of slightly startled reporters in the middle of a somber press conference on the Russia-Georgia war. (Graham got his comeuppance this week when he dragged his friend to an Orlando, Florida, Olive Garden for spaghetti and meatballs on the campaign's tab.)

"McCain always brings in a jester type," says a regular on the Straight Talk Express. "He needs to have that person. For the [2000] campaign it was [ex-strategist] Mike Murphy. For this one, he brought in Lindsey Graham." Like Dean Martin's Jerry Lewis, though, Graham is not a mere foil or fall guy but McCain's ride-along id, the unleashed little jerk McCain might like to be if he weren't now being told by his concerned campaign staff to rein in his jokes and avoid journalists. McCain's signature style of loose, self-deprecating humor? Graham vents it. ("I grew up five miles from a nuclear plant," he tells the crowd at his rally in Savannah. "Look how I turned out." Beat. "I used to be taller.") Like McCain once did, he craves parrying with the press. He even says "my friend" on television.

The jester, though, might be in trouble. *The New York Times* reports that Steve Schmidt, the flinty, no-nonsense Karl Rove protégé who's taken over McCain's campaign with orders to bring discipline to the circus, is limiting McCain's access to his circle of buddies and even restricting his use of his beloved gold Razr cell phone "in an effort to keep him more focused." "I have to wonder how it will be now," says one former McCain staffer. "Schmidt is all business. Graham is how McCain is—he wings it, shoots from the hip."

But for the moment, the gold phone is still accepting Graham's calls, and Graham is still playing an unreconstructed, freewheeling McCainiac. In spite of his exhaustion, after the Savannah town hall Graham invites me—an unknown reporter—to a multi-course Italian dinner capped off by a Baileys on ice. During the flight to Savannah, Graham had lent me his copy of *People*, and in it I had read an article about the hottest new film genre: the "bromantic comedy," exemplified by the recent two-dudes-on-a-spree hit *Superbad*. I couldn't help thinking of Graham's hijinks with McCain, and his wish, as he later put it, to be McCain's "effective servant" and "eternal optimist." "How does it feel to be part of the nation's most prominent bromance?" I ask the senator, after explaining the *People* story. Graham grins. "Let me say," he replies, "I admire John in a lot of ways, but not in *that* way."

Eve Fairbanks

Here's Johnny

Most sarcastic campaign ever.

It's hard to remember now, but there was a time when John McCain was widely viewed as a pretty earnest guy. His best-selling books are written in a tone of solemnity and idealism, with treacly titles such as *Character Is Destiny*. And he has long called for high-minded debate: "If we're going to lead," he said in early June, "we have to begin by reforming the tenor of political discussion in our campaigns."

More recently, however, McCain's tone has changed starkly. First came his campaign's "Obama Love" Web video, featuring clips of pundits fawning over the Democratic nominee to the mocking strains of Frankie Valli's "Can't Take My Eyes Off You." Next was the infamous TV spot "Celebrity," which contemptuously juxtaposed Obama with Paris Hilton and Britney Spears. Another Web ad pretended to hail Obama as the Messiah, complete with footage of Moses parting the Red Sea. "Can *you* see the light?" sneered the narrator. Still another pitched an imaginary "Fan Club" for Obama zealots.

The Republican National Committee has joined the fun. When Obama vacationed in Hawaii, the RNC issued mock travel guides highlighting his allegedly effete taste in hotels and shaved ice. After Obama said that well-inflated tires could match energy gains from new oil drilling, the RNC delivered tire pressure gauges to the hotel rooms of journalists—with juvenile notes saying the gauges, distributed on what happened to be Obama's birthday, were "[i]n celebration of Barack Obama's special day."

Finally there is McCain's recently hired in-house blogger, former *Weekly Standard* staffer Michael Goldfarb, whose writings largely consist of obnoxious chortling at Obamamania. Goldfarb recently posted a photo of Obama jogging on the beach in Hawaii, congratulating him for "keeping focused on his workout" while McCain was concentrating on the Russia-Georgia crisis. After some liberal bloggers questioned whether McCain was accurately recalling an inspiring anecdote from his Vietnam captivity, Goldfarb responded by calling it "typical of the pro-Obama Dungeons & Dragons crowd to disparage a fellow countryman's memory of war from the comfort of mom's basement."

What's interesting here is not that McCain has gone negative against Obama; it's the *way* he has gone negative, using that special blend of phony sincerity and cutting mockery that constitutes sarcasm. Indeed, John McCain is now running perhaps the most sarcastic presidential campaign in history. It's an approach in stark conflict with his image as a straight-shooting man of noble values and ideals. The question is whether he can really be both things at once.

Often derided as the lowest form of wit, sarcasm is nonetheless a kind of universal language. John Haiman, a professor of linguistics at Macalester College who has extensively studied the form, says he's not aware of a human culture that lacks it. And American politics has a long history of sarcasm—from FDR's 1944 response to a false Republican charge that he had dispatched a Navy destroyer to retrieve his Scottish terrier from a remote island ("[H]is Scotch soul was furious. He has not been the same dog since") to Ronald Reagan's memorable 1984 quip about Walter Mondale ("I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit for political purposes my opponent's youth and inexperience").

In recent years, sarcasm seems to have become a preferred tone of discourse for conservative pundits. First talk radio, and now blogging, has given rise to a new breed of aggrieved conservatives—and sarcasm is typically an expression of grievance—who see American life awash with absurd political correctness and media bias. Sarcasm allows these pundits to parody what they consider to be the excesses of liberalism; it also al-

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ANTHONY RUSSO

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lows them to communicate sentiments that aren't quite considered acceptable in contemporary political discourse. They can, for instance, denounce Obama as "the Messiah, Lord Barack Obama, the most merciful, the man-child" (Rush Limbaugh), call him "the least dangerous Hussein I know" (Ann Coulter), or label him "Princess Obama" (the conservative blog *Little Green Footballs*)—which is more polite than calling him (respectively) uppity, Muslim, or gay.

This tone has crept into Republican campaign tactics in recent years. In 2000, one of the GOP's most widely aired advertisements mocked Al Gore as a political chameleon and exaggerator. "There's Al Gore reinventing himself on television again. *Like I'm not gonna notice*," cracked a narrator. After a soundbite of Gore's alleged claim to have invented the Internet, she chimed in with a mocking, "Yeah, and I invented the remote control, too." The tone was more pronounced against John Kerry in the 2004 campaign. One Bush ad attacked Kerry for supporting a gas tax increase while showing black-and-white footage of people riding ridiculous, old-fashioned bicycles.

Of course, sarcasm is hardly a tool of the right alone; Al Franken and Stephen Colbert aren't exactly models of sincerity. Even Hillary Clinton once sardonically mocked the parting clouds and "celestial choirs" that would supposedly greet an Obama presidency. But sarcasm simply hasn't caught on as a device for Democratic politicians—including Obama—who tend to prefer earnest idealism or righteous indignation. "This is how Republicans run races. They attempt to drive a character negative using humor," says former Clinton spokesman Howard Wolfson, adding, "Generally, [Republicans] have done a better job with humor than we have."

But why has this tactic seemingly reached its pinnacle in the McCain campaign? One explanation may lie with the candidate himself. Most voters wouldn't know it from McCain's public image, but, up close and personal, he's the most sarcastic guy Washington has seen since Bob Dole. Being a wise-ass got McCain into trouble as far back as the Naval Academy, according to his memoir. Even during his captivity in North Vietnam, a Cuban psychiatrist who evaluated him noted his sarcastic streak. Today, McCain calls reporters on his press plane "you little jerks." During the nadir of his primary campaign last summer, he often quipped that "it's always darkest before it gets totally black." And he has been known to respond to journalists' obvious questions with a smart-alecky "Um, *duhh*!"

Over the years McCain's sarcasm has had a gentle, amiable quality—more Johnny Carson than Glenn Beck. But his clear resentment towards Barack Obama—whom he sees as jejune and entitled—has sharpened this natural impulse. After a 2007 dispute with Obama over ethics reform, McCain sent his rival a letter snarling, in part: "I'm embarrassed to admit that after all these years in politics I failed to interpret your previous assurances as typical rhetorical gloss routinely used in politics to make self-interested partisan posturing appear more noble. Again, sorry for the confusion, but please be assured I won't make the same mistake again."

Sarcasm has turned out to be a neat vessel for McCain's central message: the purported absurdity of a freshman senator leading the country in a time of war. In May, McCain said of Obama: "I admire and respect Senator Obama. For a young man with very little experience, he's done very well." And, after Obama said last summer that living abroad qualified him to make foreign policy decisions, McCain snorted: "I also think I'm the most qualified to run the decathlon because I watch sports on television all the time."

The bottom line, however, may be that Republicans have increased their use of sarcasm because it seems to work. "The critics may argue about the message and the tactics of the 'Celebrity' ad," says Mark McKinnon, a former McCain media consultant who sat out this campaign rather than craft attacks against Obama, whom he admires. "But they can't [dispute] that the message got attention." Of course, there's always the possibility that McCain's nobler impulses will reassert themselves, making his campaign's sarcastic tone impossible to sustain as the race wears on. Yeah, right. As *if*.

Michael Crowley

FROM THE TNR VAULT

"Conventions are often portrayed as joyous, nonstop festivals of party-hopping. In truth, they're ruthless Darwinian competitions, in which those who have attained high status, or are particularly adept at networking, gorge themselves on crab cakes and foie gras, while the socially inept are left behind to scrounge hotel vending-machine fare. The struggle is so fierce and so elemental that it consumes almost every waking moment."

—Jonathan Chait, "Desk Jockey," August 9, 2004

David Cowles

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Made Man

How Cindy Hensley invented John McCain.

NOAM SCHEIBER

On Saturday, May 17, 1980, Cindy Lou Hensley married Navy Captain John McCain at the First United Methodist Church on Central Avenue in Phoenix, not far from the bride's childhood home. After the ceremony, the wedding entourage headed nearly three miles east to the Arizona Biltmore resort, a sprawling gray oasis designed by a Frank Lloyd Wright protégé in the 1920s. Guests fêted the couple in the resort's Aztec Room, an elegant, twelve-sided banquet hall with a vaulted, gold-leaf ceiling. The 25-year-old bride seemed impervious to the desert heat. She had flawless skin and wore a long-sleeved gown with a veil that extended to the floor.

The only crack in the day's elegant veneer came from the groom. A photograph of the couple, taken against the backdrop of First United's distinctive silver cross and stained-glass wall, shows him stuffed awkwardly into a black tuxedo, which rides high up front and hangs low in the rear. His nearly white hair slopes haphazardly off to the side, and his skin is splotchy and red.

A celebrated aviator and POW, McCain was then the Navy's chief lobbyist to the U.S. Senate. Two of his groomsmen were friends he'd acquired on the job—the young Maine Senator Bill Cohen and Senator Gary Hart of Colorado. It was the type of rarefied company that would normally have turned heads at a provincial wedding. But, over the course of the day, it gradually dawned on Cohen that the bride's family was the main attraction. Cindy's father, Jim, was one of the most successful businessmen in the state—the owner of its largest Anheuser-Busch distributorship. The wedding of his daughter was a bona fide social event. "The Hensley family was very prominent," Cohen recently told me. "Having Gary and I there—it may have impressed a few people, but it didn't make an impact. . . . We were walk-ons."

There was, as it happens, one small incident that hinted at this dynamic. At the climax of the wedding ceremony, with everyone looking on, the pastor prepared to present the new couple: "I now pronounce you Mr. and Mrs. . . ."—at which point there was an awkward pause. "He stopped, he obviously didn't remember," recalls David Frazer, who was then Jim Hensley's corporate lawyer. Finally, mercifully, someone from the wedding party interjected: "John McCain."

As Cindy McCain faithfully shadows her husband in his quest for the presidency, it's hard to imagine that she was once the senior member of their partnership. Looking back, McCain's steady march from admiral's son to war hero to White House contender seems almost preordained—certainly unrelated to the brittle blond cipher at his side. Cindy brings to mind the political wives of yore—a perpetually demure and deferential presence. All the more so in an age of Elizabeth Edwards and Michelle Obama.

But the reality behind this political creation myth is far more complex. McCain was a relative nobody when he married Cindy Hensley—a middle-aged divorcé working a mid-level job in a far-off bureaucracy. It was the Hensleys who would breathe life into his prospects and provide a springboard for his ascent. Their ambitions burned every bit as brightly as his did. Except that, unlike McCain, they'd long since hidden their motives from public view.

Cindy Hensley was raised to think of herself as a member of the Phoenix elect. Her father Jim was the Phoenix area's exclusive distributor of Anheuser-Busch products like Budweiser, and, while she was in elementary school, he moved the family into a cavernous ranch-style house on Central Avenue. It had an enormous circular driveway and a fiberglass Clydesdale out front. Cindy's bedroom boasted a plush circular bed.

Cindy's mother, Marguerite "Smitty" Hensley, was a stern disciplinarian, but Jim showered his daughter with gifts. Jim and Cindy shared an interest in high-performance cars, and Jim would often take the family to the Indianapolis 500. In high school, Cindy drove a pink Jeep with a license plate that read MS BUD.

The University of Southern California was a conservative place in those days, and Cindy fit in seamlessly upon arriving there. During her freshman year, she joined Kappa Alpha Theta, a kind of finishing school for aspiring matrons. The sorority didn't allow alcohol in its house or men above the first floor unannounced. The "Theta Ladies," as they were known, even applied these rules to their fathers. If a proud papa showed up to help move his daughter in, he'd have to yell "man on the floor" before walking upstairs.

Cindy was an education major and took her studies seriously, perhaps only slightly less seriously than she took her consumption habits. "She loved to go shopping. If she would buy one thing, she would buy five," says one friend. Around the Theta House, Cindy was regarded as dutiful and good-natured, if somewhat withdrawn. "She was more on the reserved side," says Betsy McKibbin, who knew Cindy from their pledge class. "She was never one of these outgoing, gregarious people." Another classmate sighs: "As much time as I spent in her room—or she in my room—watching TV, talking about boys, I never felt close to her."

The Hensleys remained an active presence in their daughter's life well into adulthood. Jim and Smitty would materialize several times a year to treat Cindy and some classmates to dinner. "They were always just very generous with Cindy's friends," says Brad McCroskey, who dated (and later married) one of Cindy's sorority sisters. Sometimes the Hensleys would spirit Cindy and a girlfriend out of town for the weekend—to the annual USC–Notre Dame game or on a short holiday. One year, Cindy's parents threw her a lavish birthday party at the Beverly Wilshire in Beverly Hills. Many of her sorority sisters attended, as did a healthy contingent of family friends. The Hensleys bedded down in the presidential suite.

Romantic affairs were not outside the Hensleys' purview. Cindy was, in fact, in regular contact with her parents about prospective love interests. Early in college, a date had tried to hold her hand and kiss her, steps she wasn't yet keen on taking. After making arrangements for another outing, she had second thoughts and enlisted her father to bail her out. Jim told her to inform the young man she had a family engagement.

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RON SACHS/CORBIS SYGMA

Cindy Hensley and Navy Captain John McCain in Phoenix on May 17, 1980—their wedding day.

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By the following year, Cindy had developed a serious relationship with a classmate named Kerry McCluggage. McCluggage was a catch by any conventional measure: smart, ambitious, strikingly handsome. He would ascend to the presidency of his fraternity, win admission to Harvard Business School, and head Universal's television studios in his thirties. But McCluggage came up short on the one metric he couldn't control: his pedigree. He was the rare USC student putting himself through school. Friends of Cindy say the Hensleys were concerned about his family's financial situation and asked their daughter to end the relationship.

Cindy was by all accounts taken with McCluggage. They had dated steadily for over three years and at one point were even "pinned." (That is, Cindy wore McCluggage's fraternity pin as a symbol of their commitment.) But Cindy appeared to accept her parents' judgment. For all their wealth, the Hensleys were still striving to secure their place in Phoenix society. The source of their fortune was liquor, after all—not the most genteel business under any circumstances, especially so in Jim Hensley's case.

Cindy dutifully internalized her family's priorities. One night, she and two roommates were sitting in the Theta House flipping through an issue of *Cosmo*. They stumbled onto one of the magazine's trademark quizzes and, on a lark, decided to take it. The quiz claimed it could divine why a woman would get married. According to the results, the first roommate would marry for love. The second for money. And Cindy? "Cindy," recalls Nani Bush, one of the roommates, "would marry for prestige."

In 1975, during Cindy Hensley's junior year of college, John McCain took command of a squadron in Jacksonville, Florida, called VA-174, which trained pilots to fly A-7 jets. McCain was a well-known figure in the area even before he'd issued his first order. His wife, Carol, had been active in the POW movement during his nearly six-year captivity in Vietnam. "We all knew about John McCain," recalls Carl Smith, a friend and fellow Navy officer who worked on the base. "He had a certain celebrity status."

One upshot of this status was that McCain was soon in demand as a speaker at community events. Some of the local elders—retired military types, business leaders, Republican activists—began encouraging him to run for Congress. Before long, the Democratic establishment was treating him like a bona fide opponent. While speaking at his own son's high school graduation, McCain looked up and recognized a couple of Democratic operatives. He jokingly welcomed them to the ceremony.

McCain briefly toyed with a congressional run in Jacksonville, but the sheer impracticality of the idea overwhelmed him. As a lifelong Navy man, he'd never lived in any place long enough to put down roots. Worse, he had zero political experience and little personal wealth—significant liabilities under the best conditions; debilitating in a Democratic town like Jacksonville. In any case, McCain's superiors had deemed his tenure at VA-174 a success—the base had won a Meritorious Unit Citation after years of maintenance problems and accidents—and asked him to help run the Navy's Senate liaison office. McCain was intrigued by the idea of working on Capitol Hill, where he arrived in 1977. "At the time, he was still very focused on making the Navy his career," says Smith. "But the seed had been planted."

Under McCain, the liaison office enjoyed one of its few truly influential periods. In one well-chronicled episode, McCain and a deputy worked behind the scenes to save an aircraft carrier whose funding Jimmy Carter opposed. The source of McCain's influence was his charisma and personal magnetism. He quickly befriended Senate elder statesmen like John Tower, the senior Republican on the Armed Services Committee, along with a younger cohort of senators like Hart and Cohen.

Over time, McCain began to think of a political career as not just a possibility but as something akin to his destiny. He'd survived a near-fatal accident in flight school, a fire aboard an aircraft carrier early in Vietnam, then his lengthy POW captivity. He had a hard time believing he'd been spared death so he could push papers around a drab office. As McCain's son Doug reflected to *The New York Times* in 2000, his father "sensed that life held something bigger for him." Cohen recalls that, several months into their friendship, McCain was talking seriously about running for Congress. "He told me he was thinking of this. I said 'Well, that's a good idea. You're a natural politician. You like people. You're funny. Light-hearted. Substantive. It's a great combination. And you've got quite a story to tell.'"

But the old problems remained. McCain had no home base, no roots, and little cash to speak of. He knew next to nothing about running a political campaign. His personal life was more hindrance than help. His wife Carol had been a model in her youth. She was tall and elegant when he shipped off to war. The woman he came back to had put on weight and lost several inches to multiple operations following a car crash. In McCain's mind, they'd grown apart since his repatriation, but he still felt a duty to support her and their three kids. If McCain was going to fulfill his destiny, he'd have to start over.

In 1943, a bomber pilot named Jim Hensley was looking for his own fresh start. Hensley had been shot down near the North Sea in his B-17 and was convalescing in West Virginia. The 23-year-old veteran's prospects seemed grim: He'd been born in 1920 to a hard-up family in the South, where he lived until his alcoholic father relocated to Arizona. Hensley had worked as a low-level paper salesman after high school in Phoenix. He had a wife, Mary Jeanne, to support and a newborn daughter, Kathleen, who, according to family lore, took her first breaths as he was bailing from his plane and contemplating his last.

While recovering, Hensley met a young woman named Marguerite Smith—Smitty, he called her. The two hit it off so brilliantly they would soon marry, though Hensley wouldn't in-

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At left, Jim Hensley with his first wife, Mary Jeanne, the mother of Cindy's half-sister, Kathleen, in 1942. Above, Hensley with his second wife (Cindy's mom), Marguerite "Smitty" Hensley, in 1945.

COURTESY THE PORTALSKI FAMILY

form Mary Jeanne until shortly before the wedding. Around the same time, the family story goes, Hensley's brother Gene showed up in West Virginia with a fancy sports car. It was the fruit of his work for an Arizona liquor baron named Kemper Marley, and Gene wanted his brother to have it. He also wanted Jim to join him at Marley's operation, which Jim did upon returning to Arizona with Smitty.

If Hensley's fortunes improved dramatically after World War II, so did those of his hometown. Phoenix had been a military hub during the conflict, and veterans suddenly flocked to it, full of romantic notions of reinvention. But, even as the city rapidly expanded (by 1960, the population reached 400,000, up from about 60,000 two decades earlier), it never quite outgrew its frontier mentality. As the journalist Michael Wendland observed, a diner could walk into a fancy restaurant on Saturday night and still see men wearing gun holsters on their belts.

Organized crime was a relatively benign presence in Arizona in those days. Not just because Phoenix attracted such an enlightened breed of gangster, though that was part of it, but because there was more than enough action for every wise guy around. The state's commercial class had settled on a tentative understanding, according to local historian Dave Wagner: Crime bosses ran the gambling, prostitution, and liquor industries but freely interacted with more reputable merchants. The most prominent Phoenix underworld figure of the era, a gangster named Gus Greenbaum, mixed with a collection of prominent businessmen at the local Jewish country club.

Greenbaum was friends with Bugsy Siegel and had ties to Al Capone. Among other enterprises, he owned a bookie wire service, which he deputized Kemper Marley to run in the late '40s. Born to an old Arizona ranching clan in 1906, Marley would expand the family holdings into real estate and bottling. After the repeal of Prohibition, he jumped headlong into the liquor business with two wholesale outlets, United Sales Company in Phoenix and United Distributors in Tucson. But the government heavily regulated the price and quantity of liquor Marley could sell, prompting him to embrace the black market. This put Jim, who managed United Distributors, and Gene, who held the same position at United Sales, in regular contact with unsavory characters.

On March 10, 1948, the two brothers and an associate went on trial in Federal District Court in Phoenix. Prosecutors accused the defendants of conspiring to conceal the details of their transactions by falsifying federal forms some 1,284 times between 1945 and 1947. They believed the Hensleys were selling larger-than-permissible amounts at higher-than-permissible prices—in a word, bootlegging.

The feds demonstrated that the Hensleys went to elaborate, if sometimes crude, lengths to hide their illicit sales. A former United Distributors office manager named J.F. Ratliff testified that he noticed dozens of cases of whiskey missing when he showed up for work one morning. "I thought we had been robbed," Ratliff told the court, until he found a pile of phony invoices on his desk in Jim Hensley's handwriting.

The jury found Jim guilty of seven counts of making false entries, and Gene of 23 counts. It also convicted both men of the conspiracy charge. The court sentenced Gene to one year in federal prison and Jim to six months and fined both men $2,000. (An appeals court eventually suspended Jim's sentence and sent Gene to a prison camp but affirmed the convictions.)

Hensley continued working for Marley's liquor interests for several years after his conviction—long enough, in fact, to earn another indictment in 1953. (The court dismissed his portion of the case.) The previous year, he and Gene had bought a racetrack in Ruidoso, New Mexico, along with a Phoenix gambler named Teak Baldwin. Baldwin was a known criminal, and the New Mexico authorities were concerned enough about his possi-

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ble involvement to investigate. By 1955, the investigation had triggered a statewide scandal. Fortunately for Jim, he'd sold his stake in the track a few months earlier. It was, perhaps not coincidentally, less than a year after the birth of his second daughter, Cindy.

According to the official founding myth, Jim launched his own beer distributorship, Hensley & Company, in 1955, with the help of a $10,000 loan. (Unaccounted for is how a cash-strapped ex-convict would have secured the exclusive right to distribute Budweiser in Phoenix.) The distributorship became Hensley's first step in a long march to respectability. He spent inhuman hours on the warehouse floor, personally getting to know his foremen and stock boys. He mixed endlessly with local retailers and doled out Budweiser paraphernalia with missionary zeal. When strangers asked him what he did for a living, Jim would say, with a mix of pride and understatement, that he was just "a salesman."

One day in 1955, a notorious shakedown artist named Willie Bioff died in a grisly car bombing. The crime would launch Phoenix into a 20-year period of brutal violence, which eventually implicated Hensley's old associate Marley. But Hensley spent the intervening years running in the opposite direction. David Frazer, Hensley's former lawyer, knew Marley by way of another client. By the time Frazer began working with Hensley & Company in the '70s, Hensley was mostly keeping his distance from his former boss. "To my knowledge, they had no friendship at the time I was involved," Frazer told me. "I doubt very much that they kept in touch. I know there was no business relationship."

Hensley—slowly, gradually—even began raising his profile in the community. In the 1970s, for example, he helped a doctor friend named John Ginn set up a local hospital. And, yet, Hensley could never quite break into the Phoenix establishment. Once a month, a group of local businessmen and community leaders would meet for lunch and talk shop—they called themselves the Phoenix 40. By the late '70s, most of the Phoenix 40 would have heard of Hensley, even respected him. But they didn't know him personally or socialize with him.

Instead, the Hensleys entrusted their social ambitions to Cindy, who rarely let them down. She won the title of Junior Rodeo Queen in Arizona at age 14. Her senior yearbook identifies her as "best-dressed."

Whether it was status anxiety or other demons, Jim Hensley sometimes seemed like a haunted man. His son-in-law Stan Portalski had been trained as a counselor. Every now and then, Jim would phone him late at night after a few drinks. "He'd want to talk for an hour or whatever," Portalski says. "He was a lonely guy."

In April of 1979, John McCain stopped over in Honolulu, Hawaii with a congressional delegation en route to China. It was a prominent group, several senators included, and the commander-in-chief of U.S. forces in the Pacific threw a reception in its honor. While there, McCain, who was then 42, spotted a 24-year-old Cindy Hensley across the room. The Hensleys were on vacation in Hawaii, and Jim had made the guest list. As the now-familiar story goes, McCain darted over to Cindy the second he laid eyes on her.

McCain has written that he "monopolized" his future wife for the entire evening, "taking care to prevent anyone else from intruding on our conversation." It's an account echoed by Pete Lakeland, then a McCain buddy and Senate Foreign Relations Committee staffer. Lakeland says he'd shown up with McCain only to be abandoned the second he turned his back. Roughly an hour later, after several futile attempts at eye contact, Lakeland walked over and asked McCain if he was leaving. "Oh, Peter, I want you to meet Cindy Hensley. We're going to go out to dinner. You wouldn't want to go with us, would you?' " McCain said. Lakeland took the hint.

McCain was still married at this point and living with Carol in Alexandria, Virginia, but he has said that the two were estranged. The new couple spent the next several months in regular contact. Cindy was teaching special education at a high school just outside Phoenix, and McCain would frequently visit. According to a former colleague at the school, she once arranged to have him lecture the students and faculty about his Vietnam experience. Other weekends, Cindy would visit McCain in Washington, where the relationship became well-known among friends. The two would marry in May, only a month after McCain finalized his divorce.

As smitten as McCain may have been, Cindy was even more so. "She wrote to me all the time about him," says Nani Bush, who was in Cindy's wedding. "She liked the fact that he was an older man, a father figure. I remember that." McCain not only provided a stand-in for her sometimes distant father but also met with his approval. Jim Hensley loved the idea that his son-in-law was a war hero and fellow pilot. It flattered him to know that the descendant of a line of famous admirals was now part of the family.

The couple spent their first several months of married life living in Alexandria, but it was clear they'd be moving to Arizona when McCain's assignment ended. "John probably could have gone [to Florida], run there as well," says Cohen. "But, once he got married, it resolved itself. He's got family ties that go pretty deep in Arizona." Lakeland favors a more romantic interpretation: To McCain, Florida symbolized the past. It was the life he associated with his captivity in Vietnam, and which he was eager to leave behind. "He went off to Arizona for a fresh start in life," Lakeland says.

John and Cindy McCain moved to Phoenix in early 1981. Outside his new family, Captain McCain could count the number of Arizonans he knew on one hand and still have enough fingers left for a salute. But, while in Washington, McCain had prevailed upon a political consultant named Jay Smith to take up his cause. Smith's plan for getting McCain known was to leverage the Hensleys' contacts into meetings with as many prominent Arizonans as possible. "His pitch was: 'Hi, I'm John McCain. I'm new to the state, but I live here now. My wife is Cindy Hensley. I'd like the opportunity to come by and meet you,' " Smith says. Oftentimes Cindy would set up the meetings herself. The hope was that these people would open still more doors, until McCain commanded a formidable network of local muckety-mucks.

To kick the process off, Jim Hensley threw his son-in-law a welcome party and installed him as his vice president of public relations. McCain would later concede he "fit the bill" of the "upwardly mobile boss's son-in-law, who obviously lacks the experience and training typically required for the job he holds." He spent the next several months turning up at meetings of local business and civic organizations, many of which he would address as he had in Jacksonville years earlier.

The following January, John Rhodes, the iconic Phoenix representative, decided to retire. The looming primary would determine his successor in such a heavily Republican district, and it attracted two veteran pols in a matter of weeks. But it was McCain who arguably moved the quickest. Within minutes of the announcement, Cindy had found a modest two-story house in a subdivision called The Lakes. The house was in Tempe, just east of Phoenix, and officially made McCain a resident of Rhodes's district.

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY JAY SMITH (3); IPOL/GLOBE PHOTOS

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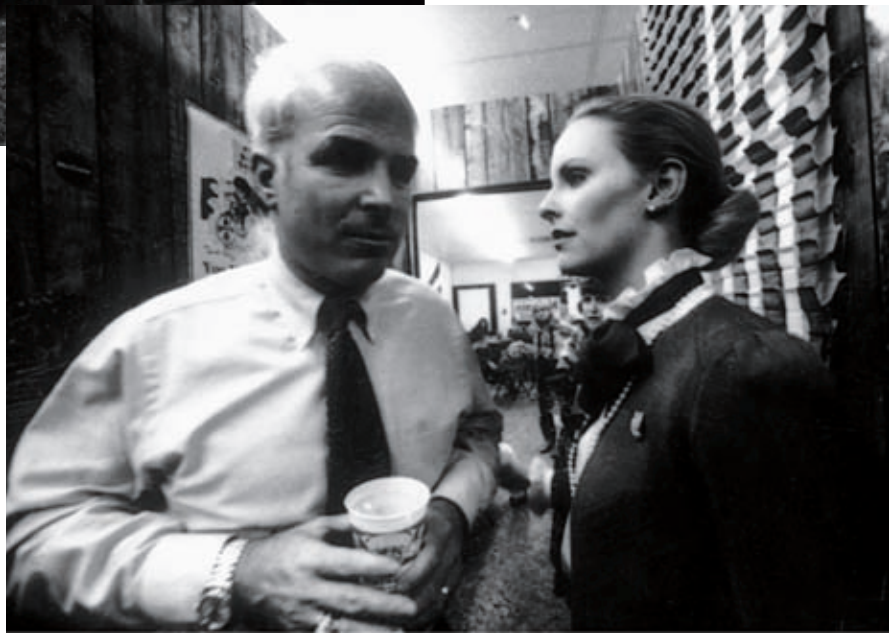

Clockwise from top, John McCain stumping for his House seat in 1982; the McCains with retiring Phoenix representative John Rhodes, whose seat McCain would win; John and Cindy share a moment on election night; McCain and his father, then-Captain John S. McCain Jr., in uniform in 1956.

McCain continued to court influential patrons—people like Charles Keating, the savings-and-loan tycoon (who would one day embroil him in scandal) and Darrow "Duke" Tully, the powerful publisher of *The Arizona Republic*. One lesser-known, but equally important, eminence was a wealthy car dealer named Lou Grubb. Back in the early '60s, Grubb had launched a series of commercials in which he would relate vignettes about his wife and kids and generally opine on the important things in life. By the 1970s, he was such a reassuring presence amid all the dizzying change that a group of Republican bigwigs—including Barry Goldwater—drafted him to run for governor. (Grubb politely declined.)

"We had a visit in my office at my dealership one day," Grubb recently told me. "John was dressed in his Navy whites. He had his father-in-law with him." Grubb was unfamiliar with McCain, but he knew Jim Hensley by reputation and was pleased by his presence. At the end of the meeting, Grubb was sufficiently impressed that he allowed McCain to name him as a supporter. "It was important," says McCain's campaign manager, Jerry Brooks. "I kind of remember going to editorial boards. . . . And we would always mention that Lou Grubb was with us."

Cindy continued to contribute. Every Monday, Brooks held a meeting to discuss tactics with his top brass: Where should the candidate spend his time? What neighborhoods should the volunteers walk? Sometimes McCain made it, sometimes not. But Cindy almost always showed. When there was something she felt Hensley & Company could assist with, she'd pipe up and instruct Brooks to "call Delgado"—that is, Bob Delgado, one of her father's lieutenants.

The effort could be all-consuming, and Cindy's involvement was sometimes excessive. "Once in a while, I'd have something laid out that week and she didn't want to do it, we'd have to talk about it

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for a while," Brooks allows. For example, Cindy would complain that the campaign had spent too much time walking one district and suggest another. "I'd say, 'Cindy, we'll have to talk to Jay [Smith] about that,'" Brooks recalls, which usually did the trick.

Of course, Cindy had every right to weigh in. Although Jim Hensley rarely splurged on himself, shopping for socks at Sears and frequenting a local restaurant chain called Black Angus, he could be exceptionally generous with family. Now that he had a son-in-law on the brink of political office, he was not one to skimp. All told, McCain raised about $313,000 for the primary campaign, according to his biographer Robert Timberg. About $170,000 of that came from personal loans. The same year, the couple reportedly received more than $750,000 from Hensley-controlled ventures. (McCain's Navy pension contributed an additional $31,000 to the household's finances.)

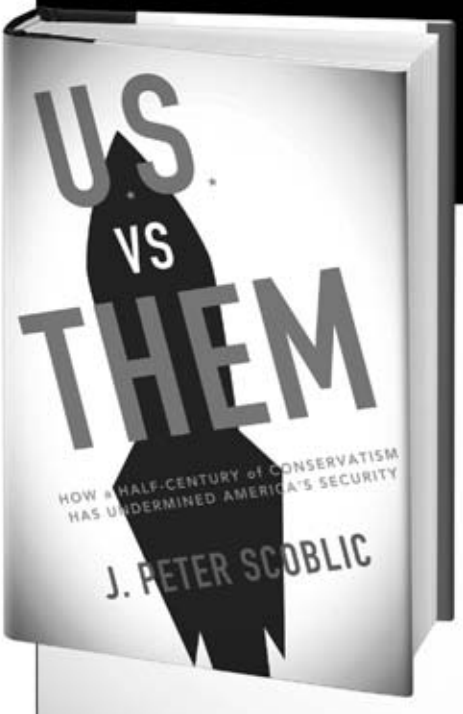
McCain amplified this financial advantage with plain old initiative. Mark Killian, who was then running for the legislature in an overlapping district, says the candidate spent several hours a day, six days a week, just knocking on doors. (He would have done it a seventh if not for the area's large Mormon population.) When McCain returned to his campaign headquarters each night, he'd personally dictate a letter to every voter he'd met, highlighting whatever issue had come up.

But, work ethic aside, the campaign was fundamentally about pairing the McCain narrative with the Hensley apparatus. It took a distinct turn after McCain aired his first TV ad. Actually, to call the production an "ad" doesn't do it justice. It was more like a mini-documentary, stretching some two minutes in length. The first half builds chronologically to McCain's POW experience. We see footage of McCain descending haltingly from an Air Force transport plane after touching down in the United States. "I certainly don't recommend the treatment," he says over the video. "But, at the same time, I've certainly become a better and enriched person for having had the experience in a myriad of ways." The ad closes with McCain driving along a desert highway, reflecting on his adopted home. "I can tell you, if you go for six years without being able to see the sunset or the sunrise, like I did, you can truly appreciate the beauty of what we have." Jim Mack, one of McCain's opponents, thought it was hands down the best commercial he'd seen. "Mine were just photographs, they weren't active moving pictures," he told me.

On primary night, the principals privately awaited the results in an RV parked behind McCain headquarters. Among those in attendance was Duke Tully, *The Arizona Republic* publisher. Tully had taken such a shine to the Navy man that, a few weeks earlier, he'd prevailed on the paper's editorial board to endorse him despite a longstanding policy of neutrality in primaries.

Midway through the evening, the steady flow of results abruptly ended owing to a to a glitch in the counting. This led to an hour or so of forced smiles and nervous joke-telling. But, once the march of data resumed, McCain took an insurmountable lead. He would win the primary and become a representative-in-waiting. The photograph in the *Republic* shows McCain looking relieved and a little shell-shocked. Cindy is smiling broadly and pressing McCain's daughter's face to her own, an embrace of pure joy.

A few months later, Jim Hensley traveled to Washington for his son-in-law's swearing in and for the reception that followed. Pete Lakeland remembers feeling buoyant as he worked his way through the receiving line. He first congratulated Mc-



Fifty years of conservatism have made us vulnerable

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Cindy waves as she and Senator McCain disembark from the plane on a July trip to Mexico City.

DANIEL AGUILAR/REUTERS/CORBIS

Cain, then turned to Cindy and her father. "Sir, you don't know how lucky you are that John could walk faster than I could, or you might have ended up with me as a son-in-law," Lakeland said. Cindy shrieked with delight. But Jim couldn't appreciate the joke. He just stared skeptically at McCain's nebbishy former colleague.

Back in February of the previous year, as McCain was formulating his plans to run for office, he and Cindy sat down for dinner at the Biltmore with Bill Shover, Tully's right-hand man at the *Republic*, and his wife. McCain expounded on his political ambitions for the better part of an hour. Toward the end of the discussion, Shover noticed that Cindy hadn't uttered a word. "Cindy, don't you have something you want to say?" Shover asked. This elicited a few incomprehensible grunts, at which point McCain stepped in. "Cindy had oral surgery today, and she's in a lot of pain. She can't talk because she had her jaws wired." Shover was aghast. "My God, why didn't you wait till she got better?" he asked. "Because I wanted to get to know you," McCain said. Cindy just looked on silently.

In retrospect, the dinner stands out a subtle omen. After that first pivotal race, McCain's star would rise faster than he or Jim Hensley could have expected. But Cindy seemed to lose her voice. She almost instantly found Washington oppressive and moved back to Arizona one year into McCain's first term. Once there, she built a largely separate life—her own support network, her own form of service (charities that clear land mines and repair cleft palates for children). And, of course, there is her well-documented addiction to prescription painkillers in the early '90s. According to those reports, it was her parents who finally noticed something amiss. McCain has said he was oblivious. (The McCain campaign did not respond to multiple interview requests.)

These days, the Cindy who accompanies her husband on the stump is still largely mute. Profiles describe her as deeply ambivalent about McCain's run for president, and she gives the impression of dutiful—rather than enthusiastic—participation. With the exception of her poorly received jab at Michelle Obama's patriotism, she's hardly registered in the political conversation.

One evening in early August, I met Cindy's half-sister Kathleen Portalski at her home in a middle-class neighborhood of Phoenix. Kathy is an attractive older woman with sad green eyes and long blond hair, which she was wearing in a ponytail. Her husband, Stan, answered the door and led me into a cluttered living room. A Budweiser clock flanked the doorway.

Before Jim died in 2000, he'd repeatedly indicated that Kathy and the family would be taken care of. But, when the time finally came to sort out his will, the Portalskis ended up with a mere $10,000. Still, Kathy herself seemed less angry than hurt. What she seemed to want most of all, even at 65, was a dad.

Kathy's lasting impression of Jim was his emotional distance: Her earliest memories of her father involve the two of them at a bar. "He didn't know how to talk to little girls," she told me. As a child, she looked forward to shopping for school clothes with her father every year. But, by adolescence, he simply outfitted her with a charge card—one of the first in Phoenix—and sent her off on her own. At several points in the conversation, she looked at no one in particular, slowly shook her head from side to side, and said, "It was very disappointing to have a father like that."

Kathy explained that she had always been more expressive than her sister. The difference was largely a function of Smitty, who tended to Cindy's manners and instilled an ethos of stiff-upper-lip-ness. Kathy recalls sitting with Cindy in the Hensley living room after their grandmother's funeral in the 1970s, at which point she began to cry. Cindy was barely an adult, but was offended by the outburst. "Oh, pull yourself together," she chided her sister repeatedly.

As Kathy talked, it became clear that Cindy's childhood had instilled a particular lesson: If she put on a perpetually good face, she'd eventually be rewarded. And, for a while, it looked like that bargain had held. John McCain seemed to be a reward ten times over. By marrying him, Cindy was pleasing one father and getting another. Except it didn't quite work out that way.

Years later, at Jim Hensley's funeral, friends and family members would see John McCain choke up while reciting a Robert Louis Stevenson poem in honor of his father-in-law. "Here he lies where he longed to be; / Home is the sailor, home from sea, / And the hunter home from the hill." In her own remarks, Cindy poignantly recalled how her father had sent her to school and to Europe and pronounced him her friend. But she shed no tears, at least not for public consumption. As with so many times in the past, she'd somehow managed to pull herself together. ◆

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Sam Tanenhaus

THE MOVEMENT'S REMAINS

From Barry Goldwater to John McCain.

I.

THE CONSERVATIVE movement has never been in poorer shape than it is today, but who among us is confident that it is going away? By all estimates, the Republicans are confronting the worst prospects for a governing party since 1976 (post-Watergate) or even 1932 (post-Crash), and yet the presidential race grows tighter by the day. All this has some thinking back fearfully to elections past, when the Democratic Party seemed to hold the advantage, only to see its high-minded good-government candidates dismembered by the Republican "attack machine." Already some now worry that Barack Obama may simply be next in the line of sacrificial saints, joining Adlai Stevenson and Al Gore, George McGovern and Michael Dukakis. And conservatism's moving parts are still intact. Rush Limbaugh and his fourteen million listeners are very much with us. So, too, is the brain trust that gave us the Iraq war; some of its best minds (Robert Kagan, for one) are now nestled in the McCain campaign. Karl Rove, the tarnished "boy genius" who presided over the midterm debacle of the 2006 elections, is back in the game—in fact playing several games at once (Fox News, *Newsweek*, informal McCain adviser). Even George Bush, stuck with the lowest approval ratings in modern history, remains a champion fund-raiser.

The right thrives elsewhere, too—as an example to liberals who have studied its strategies and its tactics. The inflamed young netroots organizers who propelled Howard Dean to national prominence in 2004 and damaged Joseph Lieberman's campaign in 2006 consciously modeled their styles of protest politics on the insurgent campaigns of Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan. And in the last, desperate phase of her primary struggle, Hillary Clinton nakedly deployed the racially charged idiom perfected by "white backlash" candidates from George Wallace to Jesse Helms.

And there is the curious case of liberal academics who have fashioned themselves into authorities on Republican tradecraft, particularly in the realm of button-pushing rhetoric. Foremost among them is the Berkeley linguist and cognitive scientist George Lakoff, who for some time has been tutoring Democrats in the uses of emotionally charged language so that they, like Republicans, can tap the "irrational" impulses of voters. The appeal of this recommendation of demagoguery is its "science." Lakoff's recent book *The Political Mind: Why You Can't Understand 21st-Century American Politics With an 18th-Century Brain* explores Republicans' ingenuity at "preparing the seedbed of our brains with their high-level general principles so that when 'tax relief' was planted, their framing could take root and sprout." He detests the ideology, but he admires the method.

Another important installment in the Democrats' new training in Republican-style ruthlessness is *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation*, by Drew Westen, a professor of psychology at Emory University, who outlines methods by which Democrats might copy the verbal roundhouses thrown by Republican candidates. According to Westen, Gore's mistake during the 2000 debates was to deflect Bush's personal attacks when he might have roared back in kind. Here, according to Westen, is what Gore should have said: "If someone is going to restore dignity to the Oval Office, it isn't a man who drank his way through three decades of his life and got investigated by his father's own Securities and Exchange Commission for swindling people out of their retirement savings." On the strength of his theories, Westen became a fleeting sensation a year ago. His fans included Bill Clinton, who told *The New York Times*: "To say I think it's a very important book is an understatement." Clinton added that he was underlining passages for his wife as she was preparing to begin her campaign.

THE WRECKING CREW: HOW CONSERVATIVES RULE
By Thomas Frank
(Metropolitan Books, 369 pp., $25)

NIXONLAND: THE RISE OF A PRESIDENT AND THE FRACTURING OF AMERICA
By Rick Perlstein
(Scribner, 896 pp., $37.50)

More useful is the emerging literature of the right being written from the left, much of it the work of a new generation of journalists and historians who have embraced, with a kind of ravening fascination, the history and the anthropology of the conservative movement. They are right to have made this their subject. It is the one political narrative they really know—know, that is, as an active vital force in American politics. And so collectively they have produced some of the most illuminating political writing of the past decade—in Matthew Dallek's *The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics*, David Greenberg's *Nixon's Shadow: The History of the Image*, Lisa McGirr's *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*. Unlike older liberal writers, for whom the conservative ascendancy remains an affront, these newer writers were born too late to have experienced any sustained period of liberal triumph, and while some are unabashedly on the left, they do not need to be persuaded of how rich a subject postwar conservatism is—rich in rebellious appetites, in unexpected victories, in stimulating characters.

What these books do not offer, alas, is an enthusiastic or extended engagement with ideas. The authors never really ask what conservatism is, or if indeed there is a single thing that we can call conservatism. Instead they simply equate it with one wing of the Republican Party—the Goldwater-Reagan-Bush wing. This is a mistake, because conservatism—as distinct from the conservative movement—has shaped our intellectual and cultural life over the past generation. These writers pay some attention to conservative thinkers, principally journalists; but they seldom explore the ideas themselves, even though conservatism, especially in its great period—the 1940s to the 1970s—offered a wealth of them: James Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution* and *The Machiavellians*; Milton Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom*; Willmoore Kendall's essays on "orthodoxy" as a counter-

Sam Tanenhaus, the editor of The New York Times Book Review and The Week in Review, is writing a biography of William F. Buckley Jr.

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statement to consensus, and on America's "two popular majorities"; the essays that Irving Kristol, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Nathan Glazer wrote in the first years of *The Public Interest*; Garry Wills's *Nixon Agonistes* and *Confessions of a Conservative*; and others. This same curious resistance to ideas is a striking, and disappointing, feature of two of the most ambitious new chroniclers of the right, Thomas Frank and Rick Perlstein.

II.

Thomas Frank became famous with the publication of his first book, *What's the Matter With Kansas?*, which argued that Republican election victories are rooted in the conservative movement's deployment of a cynical politics of bait-and-switch practiced on Middle American voters, who, failing to grasp that the GOP is the enemy of their economic interests, are dependably hoodwinked by appeals to their cultural prejudices against the elite snobs in the Democratic Party, even though it is Democrats who offer programs that would actually benefit the working class. When it appeared in 2004, *What's the Matter With Kansas?* was a best-seller much read by liberals reeling from the blow of George W. Bush's re-election.

Frank's new book is a more determined work of exposé, in the muckraking tradition of Lincoln Steffens and Ida Tarbell. Its stated theme is "the capture of government by business interests," but it is really a scathing portrait of Washington, D.C.—the "privatopia," the "city of bought men," "Golconda on the Potomac"—a den of corrupt operators fitted into $1,000 suits, gleaming cuff links, "vivid, shimmering ties." Where once it was populated by New Dealers, "talented, idealistic about the possibilities of government, and young," it has now become a cesspool, "the developers' city, the lobbyists' city, the defense contractors' city; a capital undone and remade by Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush and a thousand wild-eyed deregulators." The principal villains in *The Wrecking Crew*—Jack Abramoff, Grover Norquist, Tom DeLay, and Newt Gingrich—already belong to the past, but Frank usefully traces their overlapping connections, which in some instances date to the Reagan years or before, when they and other operatives like Lee Atwater and Karl Rove were just starting out. All share the movement's hatred of government—especially when it functions well; and their collective goal was to destroy government by "boring from within," as the communists used to say, and at the same time feeding at the deep Beltway trough. Washington, in Frank's account, is the movement's Gomorrah, "what all of America looks like when conservatives run the machinery of the state."

Frank writes with the delighted outrage of an authentic satirist. The book repays reading just for its portrait of Abramoff—the "supercorruptionist" with "his constant references to *The Godfather*, his black trench coat and fedora, his Meyer Lansky memorabilia, the murder argot which will no doubt serve him and his friends well during their prison years." Abramoff resurfaces throughout the narrative, appearing now as the insurgent leader of the College Republicans, honing dirty tricks on campus liberals; now on K Street as a prodigiously connected lobbyist, colluding with Gingrich "revolutionaries" and representing the "labor gulag" of Saipan, notorious for its brutal mistreatment of imported Asian workers: "What happened on Saipan really was an experiment in the free market in about as unregulated a state as it gets."

Much of this is entertaining—if also familiar, and at times monotonously so. But the trouble comes when Frank moves from satire to argument:

> Yes, today's conservatives have disgraced themselves, but they have not strayed from the teaching of their forefathers or the great ideas of their movement. When conservatives appoint the opponents of government agencies to head those government agencies; when they auction their official services to the purveyor of the most lavish 'golf weekend'; when they mulct millions from groups with business before Congress; when they dynamite the Treasury and sabotage the regulatory process and force government shutdowns—in short, when they treat government with contempt—they are running true to form. They do these things not because they are bad conservatives. They do them because they are *good* conservatives, because these unsavory deeds follow naturally from the core doctrines of the conservative tradition.

What "tradition" is Frank referring to, exactly? Apparently there is just one: Albert Jay Nock and his book *Our Enemy, the State*, which was published in 1935. Nock's book certainly is important. It was required reading in the first stage of the movement, when "economic individualists"—or libertarians—were beginning to attack Franklin D. Roosevelt, whom Nock (like his friend H. L. Mencken) insisted was a dictator, a homegrown version of Mussolini or Stalin. But Nock was principally a literary man, a dandiacal elitist and member of the self-appointed "remnant" who stood apart from the mob and its vulgar aspirations and tastes. (William F. Buckley Jr. was much influenced by his prose style.) His sketchy political ideas, such as they were, did not reverberate in the broader conservative world. To pin an entire ideology on him—to say, as Frank does, that "generations of young conservatives" acquired their hatred of government from Nock—is a fantasy.

But then fantasy may suit Frank's intention. Since conservatives are absurd, conservative ideas must be absurd, too. Or at least the one conservative idea that Frank has selected. But there are competing ones—a plenitude of them, in fact, and many resist Frank's complacent formulation. Consider Herbert Hoover, who was the model of a pro-business conservative, but also a Theodore Roosevelt–style progressive, utterly dedicated to the ideal of incorruptible government. His fame and his political career were owed to his heroic administration of diminished food supplies during World War I. He was also an ardent critic of rampant Wall Street speculation who in the 1920s pleaded with Calvin Coolidge to regulate Wall Street. Or consider another conservative seriously immersed in questions of centralized power: the ex-Trotskyist James Burnham, whose discussions of post–New Deal Washington acknowledged the dangers of lobbyists (the "fifth branch" of government). He defended them, as a matter of principle, because they had been present since pre-constitutional times and helped to diffuse centralized power and encouraged citizen participation in lawmaking. "As the American government actually works," Burnham wrote of lobbying in his book *Congress and the American Tradition*, published in 1959, "it is thought entirely normal, and neither scandalous nor odd, that the text of a law on veterans' pensions should have been prepared by the American Legion . . . or the American Federation of Labor as well as the National Association of Manufacturers on the wording of amendments to a labor relations law." That is hardly a recipe for a later generation of Jack Abramoffs.

Frank's grasp of conservative ideology is more secure when it comes to the middle range of think-tank writers and op-ed specialists who write tracts such as *The Politics of Plunder* (which describes public transportation as "mass transit robbery") or contribute to *Regulation* magazine (published by the Cato Institute). Frank's summary of this style

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of conservative anti-government argument is pitch-perfect:

> *Bribery?* Well, the wingers demand, what do you call the subsidies and welfare and food stamps and affirmative action and Social Security benefits that flow from Uncle Sam to the "special interests" who keep returning these damned liberals to the Congress? *Self-aggrandizement?* How about the vast army of bureaucrats and Washington "experts" whose only concern is to grab more power for themselves, to exert control over every little aspect of the economy? *Theft?* Isn't that just a synonym for income tax? And isn't waste a synonym for all the idiotic pork-barrel projects on which they blow our money? *Political machine?* Why, isn't that what you call such an arrangement in its entirety?

Frank's subject finally is a limited class of conservatives—the middle rung of Washington ideologues, who give voice to a particular brand of libertarianism that occupies one sector, but only one, of the conservative spectrum. And for all the power that Frank ominously imputes to them, they are only the symptoms, and not the causes, of conservatism's decline.

III.

Rick Perlstein is an altogether more interesting case, a narrative historian whose two giant histories neatly bookend the Bush years. His first book, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus*, was a genial, absorbing, incident-thick chronicle of Goldwater's long-shot presidential campaign of 1964. Published six months before September 11, 2001, it was the rare work of history that seems destined to explain its own moment—the first months of the Bush administration. Today, after so much has happened, it takes some effort to recall just how unusual that brief period was. After the election of 2000, Bush's claim on the presidency was thinner than any in modern memory. The only clear precedent dated back to 1876, when another sitting Republican governor, Rutherford B. Hayes, lost the popular vote, with disputed outcomes in several states (including Florida), and then secured the presidency by supervention—in his case a commission of electors who, voting along partisan lines, awarded Hayes the office by a single vote. Recognizing the fragility of his victory, and the depth of division within the nation, Hayes wisely pledged in writing to serve a single term.

No one expected George W. Bush to do the same. The office of the presidency and the dispensations of power have changed too much since then. Moreover, Bush seemed likely to govern much as a Democrat would. As David Frum points out in his recent book, *Comeback: Conservatism That Can Win Again*, it was Bush, not Gore, "who cunningly presented himself as Clinton's true heir. . . . Like Clinton, Bush claimed a record as an 'education governor.' Like Clinton, Bush promised a small tax cut only after he had met all his spending priorities. Like Clinton, Bush deftly maneuvered his opponents away from the political center." To which one might add, Bush had run as a conciliator, and had also built a reputation, when he was governor of Texas, for being a skilled compromiser who had collaborated closely with Democrats in the statehouse and professed unease with hard-edged partisanship.

And yet, once installed in the White House, the Republican Clinton metamorphosed almost instantly into a doctrinaire winger. Few had grasped the man's underlying sense of mission. Bush was an ideologue after all. How could this be? Perlstein's book, a sweeping account of the conservative movement's first great national crusade, the doomed presidential campaign of Barry Goldwater, helped to explain it. First, Goldwater's nomination, achieved in defiance of the GOP's national establishment, established a pattern of insurgent conservative campaigns propelled by the aggressive tactics that Bush's election team used so many years later: the grassroots Goldwaterites who filled stadiums in 1964 prefigured the herd of Republican operatives who descended on Florida during the recount, exhibiting a passionate intensity unmatched by the other side. They won, it seemed, because they wanted it more. Second, Goldwater's campaign had permanently realigned the Republican Party, shifting its base of power to the Sunbelt. George Bush, Dick Cheney, and Karl Rove were in this sense Goldwater's progeny. Each was also heir to the movement's contempt for East Coast elites and to its ingrained loathing for Washington "bureaucrats."

Now, as the Bush years limp at last toward their conclusion, Perlstein has written a big book, even longer and more sprawling than the first, about Richard Nixon and his legacy. *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* again promises to illuminate the condition of our current politics. This time the central character is another Sunbelt figure who, in Perlstein's telling, emerges as a sinister genius of divisive politics—"positive polarization," perfectly attuned to the disruptions of the 1960s, when an aggrieved but very large class of Americans felt increasingly alienated from their society.

The narrative begins where the Goldwater story ended, with Lyndon Johnson's landslide victory in 1964, and it concludes with Nixon's equally massive re-election in 1972. How could the same nation that gave 61 percent of the popular vote and 486 electoral votes to the author of the Great Society provide an equivalent margin (not quite 61 percent of the popular vote and 520 electoral votes) to a president who preached the virtues of "law and order" and was a critic of the liberal welfare state? The answer, Perlstein explains, is that "in the eight years in between" the two elections, "the battle lines that define our culture and politics were forged in blood and fire." The blood and fire were Vietnam and civil disorder, which ended the great period of liberal consensus that climaxed under Johnson and then unraveled. The same voter who in 1964 "pulled the lever for the Democrat for president because to do anything else . . . seemed to court civilizational chaos," in 1972 "pulled the lever for the Republican for exactly the same reason."

Perlstein rightly starts with Johnson, reminding us just how much he was able to do in his first years, thanks to the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the nomination of Barry Goldwater. "In late 1963, Kennedy's principal legislation had been stalled in Congress for many months. With his death, the bills were passed—out of homage, not to mention 'remorse, guilt, fear,' " in Moynihan's words; the subsequent Goldwater debacle swept in huge majorities. "Lyndon Johnson took advantage of the weakened opposition," Perlstein writes. "His hero was Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Now he *became* Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Actually, he outpaced him. The liberals' struggle to pass federal funding for education had been a dry political hole since the New Deal. Johnson passed it in the House in March [1965] by a margin of 263–153. He then insisted the Senate pass the same bill without a single word changed. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act passed the Senate two weeks later with only eighteen votes in opposition." Next came Medicare, "another stalled New Deal–era initiative, steered by Johnson past its permanent obstacle, the American Medical Association."

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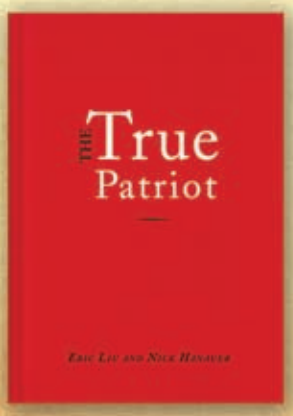

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But the cracks in consensus liberalism had already begun to show. Racial tensions had moved out of the South and into northern cities. There had been a sequence of summer riots during the 1964 campaign, followed by fears of "white backlash." In the primaries, George Wallace, the arch-segregationist, ran up impressive numbers in cities such as Gary, Indiana. Johnson's landslide quieted the problem but did not eliminate it. In August 1965, five days after the Voting Rights Act was signed, there was a major riot in Watts—12,000-plus National Guardsmen were brought in to subdue the mobs. "Some whites noticed a pattern," Perlstein writes. "In 1964, rioting had broken out a few weeks before the signing of the *last* civil-rights-law-to-end-all-civil-rights-laws. Watts wasn't even the only riot that week; in Chicago, a black neighborhood went up after an errant fire truck killed a woman. Some whites noticed some liberal politicians seemed to be excusing it all. *Time* quoted Senator Robert F. Kennedy: 'There is no point in telling Negroes to obey the law. To many Negroes the law is the enemy.'"

Perlstein sets all this out quickly and fluently. He excels at journalistic reconstruction, weaving together news accounts (at times simply headlines), magazine pieces, television clips. And he has read a lot of books. Yet there are curious elisions in this huge volume—elisions in the realm of ideas. Perlstein leaves out, for instance, the historic speech that Johnson delivered at Howard University in June 1965, in which he announced a remarkable change in racial policy premised on a new vision of racial equality. The government would no longer limit itself to issues of judicial and constitutional rights addressed in the two civil rights acts, Johnson declared. The government was now obligated "to shatter forever not only the barriers of law and public practice, but the walls which bound the condition of man to the color of his skin." Re-making the economic and social landscape was, Johnson asserted, "the next and more profound stage of the battle for civil rights. We seek not just freedom but opportunity—not just legal equity but human ability—not just equality as a right and a theory, but equality as a fact and as a result." This was the centerpiece of the War on Poverty.

The speech was based on Moynihan's report, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," submitted to the Department of Labor. It argued for a "national family policy" that would address the "tangle of pathology" besetting inner-city blacks, in particular the "drastic" increase in illegitimate births. Meant only to be read internally, which explained Moynihan's blunt, urgent prose, the memorandum was leaked to the press by the administration in order to show just how serious Johnson's stated intentions were. But the strategy backfired. Moynihan came under fierce attack—not from conservatives but, to his astonishment, from liberals, who interpreted his report as defamatory because he seemed to be accusing blacks of vices, including sexual promiscuity, found equally among prosperous whites. Moynihan, the architect of a radical proposal for aiding black families, found himself accused of racism.

Perlstein, though he omits the Howard speech, does discuss Moynihan's report and the furor it caused. He cites, accurately, its role in Moynihan's increasing conservatism, which attracted the interest of the incoming Nixon administration. Of the report Perlstein remarks that "the message that culture, not economics, was the driving force in poverty delighted conservatives and made Moynihan public enemy number one among left-wing antipoverty activists." This is misleading. Moynihan's report did indeed describe the culture of poverty. But it also described the unique obstacles faced by blacks, chief among them the legacy of racism, along with welfare laws that encouraged single-parent households. And Moynihan was hardly indifferent to economics. His concern, in fact, was that despite the civil rights measures Johnson enacted, African Americans "remain terribly weak in economic and social terms—a situation that is, if anything, more conspicuous in the face of a booming, full-employment economy."

Wounded by the denunciations he endured, Moynihan did indeed sour on Great Society idealism and on some government programs, though later he reconsidered. But the original object of his wrath was a growing ideological force that opposed consensus policies, namely, "the liberal Left," whose adherents, said Moynihan, were indifferent to the plight of those they claimed to defend. "Typically, the refusal of the liberal Left to accept the unpleasant facts of life for the poor—there is delinquency in the slums, but those kids in the suburbs are just as bad and don't get arrested, etc. etc.—leads to the same position as does the insistence of the extreme conservatives on just such facts: namely, to do nothing," Moynihan maintained. "The liberal Left will acknowledge the relevance of these facts only to the extent that they serve as an indictment of American society; after that it loses interest."

Why does this episode matter? Because it complicates the picture that Perlstein wants to simplify. It is much easier to cast Moynihan as an embittered defector from liberalism than to explore the ways in which, under particular conditions or pressures, liberal premises may be reformulated into expressions of conservative protest—and conversely, the ways in which conservative principles may become the unexpected bulwarks of liberal values. Yet it was this dialectic, repeated constantly in the 1960s, that caused so many voters to switch sides in 1968 and 1972.

Some, no doubt, were simply frightened or angry. But others suspected that right and left—and perhaps the two parties—had traded places. The first sign came in the 1966 congressional elections, lately misrepresented in George Packer's essay "The Fall of Conservatism," published in *The New Yorker* this spring. Packer describes how Nixon, looking ahead to 1968, "saw that he could propel himself back to power on the strength of a new feeling among Americans who, appalled by the chaos of the cities, the moral heedlessness of the young, and the insults to national pride in Vietnam were ready to blame it all on the liberalism of President Lyndon B. Johnson." These angry whites included "the kind of men whom Nixon whipped into a frenzy one night in the fall of 1966" in a hotel in Columbia, South Carolina, in a room "full of sweat, cigar smoke, and rage," Packer reports. The evening's "rhetoric, which was about patriotism and law and order, 'burned the paint off the walls.'" The result? "In November the Republicans won a midterm landslide." It is a rich tableau. But it is inaccurate. The big Republican winners in 1966 were not rednecks or rabble-rousers. They were centrists, senators such as Charles Percy (Illinois), Howard Baker (Tennessee), Robert Griffin (Michigan), Mark Hatfield (Oregon), and Edward Brooke (Massachusetts), the first African American elected to the chamber since Reconstruction. In the governor's contest in Maryland, the segregationist Democrat George P. Mahoney ("Your Home Is Your Castle—Defend It") lost to the moderate Republican Spiro T. Agnew. It all signaled the ascendancy not of the martial right, but, as the *Times* put it in an editorial, "a new generation of young, moderate Republicans."

In April 1968, after a strong challenge by Eugene McCarthy in the New Hampshire primary prompted Johnson not to seek re-election, there was much jubilation on the right. No one should have been more pleased than Buckley, the decade's leading conservative intellectual,

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unsurpassed in his loathing of Johnson's "statist" programs. Instead Buckley was disturbed. "This is an important datum," he wrote in his column shortly after Johnson's announcement:

> Some will hail it as evidence that The People are in better command of their own affairs. Others, conservatives for the most part, will wonder whether it is all a cause for rejoicing. The conservative fears plebiscitary government, for the very reasons given by Burke and Adams. Instant guidance by the people of the government means instability, and instability is subversive of freedom. If Lyndon Johnson has to step down because 45 percent of the Democrats in New Hampshire, half of them unable to reply accurately to the question whether Senator McCarthy was for or against the Vietnam War, voted for McCarthy, and because thousands of college students moo over Bobby Kennedy . . . there is something somehow unsettling about it all.

This nuance is missing from Perlstein's book, which, for all its impressive sweep and vivid detail, insistently simplifies the subjects it touches. Here, for instance, is how Perlstein introduces the protagonist in his narrative:

> Richard Nixon was a serial collector of resentments. He raged for what he could not have or control. At the age of seven he so wanted a jar of pollywogs a younger boy had collected from the forbidden canal that he beaned the kid in the head with a toy hatchet (his victim bore the scar for life). He ever felt unfairly put upon: at age ten he wrote a letter to the mother he revered, rendered distant by the raising of four other often-sickly boys, for a school assignment in the voice of a pet. Addressed "My Dear Master," it spun out fantastic images of unearned persecutions: "The two dogs that you left with me are very bad to me. . . . While going through the woods one of the boys triped [*sic*] and fell on me. . . . He kiked [*sic*] me in the side. . . . I wish you would come home right now." A few months later he betrayed another foreshadowing trait: groveling to elevate his station in life. "Please consider me for the position of office boy mentioned in the Times paper," he wrote to the big-city daily his family took and which he devoured, the reactionary *Los Angeles Times*. "I am eleven years of age. . . . I am willing to come to your office at any time and I will accept any pay offered."

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This is the burlesque edition of Auden's "psychopathic god." Out of small hungers—and quite normal ones (a boy lonely for his mother and desperate for a job)—a monster arises who absorbs into himself all the blind ferocities of his age. Like Thomas Frank, Perlstein is almost comically reductive. Lurking beneath the swaths of colorful prose is the same Nixon, awash in self-pity but also self-aggrandizement, who has been thrust at us for many years now—the Nixon of the novelist Robert Coover, of the psychobiographers Fawn M. Brodie and Bruce Mazlish, of Oliver Stone's melodramatic film, and of Peter Morgan's maudlin play *Frost/Nixon*. Perlstein has added one new ingredient—or rather borrowed it (as he acknowledges) from Chris Matthews's book *Kennedy and Nixon: The Rivalry That Shaped Postwar America*, which describes—as other books have also done—the campus rivalries at Whittier College, the small Quaker school that Nixon attended.

Whittier had a social club, called the Franklins, whose members came from the social elite, such as they existed on an obscure campus in small-town southern California in the Depression years. "Franklins were well-rounded, graceful, moved smoothly, talked slickly," Perlstein writes. Nixon, not meant for this company, gathered other outcasts into a rival club, the Orthogonians (meaning "those at right angles," four-square). They were "the strivers, those not to the manner born, the commuter students like him. He persuaded his fellows that reveling in one's unpolish was a nobility of its own." Nixon enjoyed a great triumph when he defeated a Franklin for student-body president.

For Perlstein—following Matthews, who is still promoting, on his television program, an "ins versus outs" view of the world—this battle of the frat clubs would remain paramount throughout Nixon's life. His adversaries, the sons of privilege, would always be Franklins, while he was the tribune of the awkward, plainspoken, "Republican cloth-coat" Orthogonians—the townies, shut out of the country club, up past midnight doing their homework, in Nixon's case waking at 4 a.m. and driving to Los Angeles markets to buy fresh produce for his father's grocery store. He was naturally disposed to tangle with Franklins. Alger Hiss was a Franklin. So was Jack Kennedy. The list could stretch on indefinitely. America is a big country, a rich preserve of potential "smart guys." There is always room for another name on the enemies list.

IV.

All this is accurate enough, but as an analysis it is not especially deep, fixated is it on Nixon's fixations. To be sure, Nixon was the most broodingly interior of presidents—painfully shy, miserable in most company. His craving for privacy was magnified by the hugely public humiliations that he suffered, many, though not all, of his own doing. He had, as Garry Wills wrote in *Nixon Agonistes*, still the one indispensable book on its subject, "a permanent air of violation." But Nixon's air of violation matters only because it opens up vistas on the public life that he chose for himself. That a man so introverted should have made a career in politics almost defies reason. That he succeeded so well makes Nixon interesting, because it means his defining conflict was with himself; and so, of all the modern presidents he has inspired the most good writing.

It is also what makes Nixon most like us, in his doubts and insecurities; and this in turn explains the fact, so often overlooked, that Nixon was one of the most accomplished vote-getters in history, a phenomenon who appeared on his first national ticket, as Dwight Eisenhower's running mate, at the age of thirty-nine. How to understand this?

In Perlstein's formulation, those who voted for Nixon were really voting against something else: Watts and Woodstock, militant campus revolts, riots at both conventions in 1968, Kent State, and all the other events that occupy the teeming foreground in *Nixonland*. It is a thoroughly plausible argument. It is, in fact, Richard Hofstadter's theory of American popular movements as upsurges of repudiation, of grievance and spilled-over anxiety. But the formulation is incomplete. However much the "outs" may resent the "ins," they are never more offended than when the "ins" exhibit contempt for their own privilege, for this implies contempt for the fondest dreams of the aspirants. This is why one Orthogonian, Joe McCarthy, launched his notorious attack on "those who have had all the benefits that the wealthiest nation on earth has had to offer … the finest homes, the finest college educations and the finest jobs in government we can give." It is why, too, the pro-Nixon hardhats who stormed City Hall in 1970, enraged that the flag was being flown at half-mast in respect for the Kent State dead, carried a placard that read "God Bless the Establishment."

And it is why Nixon, to the astonishment of so many, proved to be an upholder of the liberal consensus. Shortly after taking office, he resumed the very policies that Johnson had pursued. Perlstein writes:

> Nixon established something called the Urban Affairs Council, a domestic NSC [National Security Council], and named a Democrat, Daniel Patrick Moynihan of the Kennedy-Johnson Labor Department, to run it; the cup of bipartisanship, that Holy Grail of the pundit class, runneth over. Moynihan helped prepare Nixon's first message to Congress, a conciliatory performance that endorsed Johnson's poverty program. The Senate majority leader, Mike Mansfield, predicted a *stronger* role for the Senate than under LBJ. "He knows that if his administration is to succeed," the *Post* observed, "he will have to have the cooperation of the Democratic Congress." In February, Nixon took his presidency's first overseas trip, to England, France, West Germany, and Italy—to "listen," Nixon said. *The New Republic* found the March 4 press conference upon his return "dazzling"; *The New York Times* called it a "tour de force." The editorial headlines ran "A National Good Deed," "Good Work, Mr. President," "Mission Accomplished."

It didn't last, of course. The mutual distrust was too great, even when Nixon began to end the Vietnam War. "By 1972 the original 1969 print-out tables of withdrawal that [Melvin] Laird still flourished in the office of the Secretary of Defense were dirty, dog-eared and tattered, but the targets had been met," Theodore H. White wrote in *The Making of the President 1972*. "From 549,500 to 524,500 to 484,000 to 434,000 to 284,000 to 184,000, the number of troops had fallen to 139,000 as election year opened. In 1968 and early 1969 it was not uncommon for 300 Americans to be killed in a week; by midsummer of 1972 the average had fallen to 3 or 4. Out There, Nixon had promised to get the boys home; and for three years he had not missed a target date, or fallen short of the promise."

Nixon had inherited Vietnam from Kennedy and Johnson. It was the liberals' war—the climax of their policy of communist containment. Then the liberals turned against it, and so, eventually, did most of the country. But the Cold War was still in full swing, and a hardline anti-communist such as Nixon had the best chance of getting us out of Vietnam without sending the wrong message abroad. And Nixon got the job done. His reward was to receive no thanks or even credit, least of all in the media, with which he was fatally locked in a bitter battle of his own, dating

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back to his earliest days in politics. He avenged himself by loosing on the press his bizarre vice president, Spiro Agnew, a hinge moment in modern politics that set us on the course that later delivered us Rush Limbaugh and Fox News, with its sardonic parody ("fair and balanced") of a "mainstream" media it assumes to be rife with contempt.

When Nixon declared war on the press, the public sided with him. In fact, it sided with him most of the time—until the crimes of Watergate, the outgrowth of his paranoia, brought him down, as well they should have, although Watergate too was a more ambiguous event than we may suppose. The best that can be said of Nixon's transgressions is that they did not lapse into violence, unlike so much else in that period. In fact, the ultimate contribution of modern conservatism may be that it re-directed political passions back into institutions. The "movement" can be accused of much, but its legions seldom took to the streets.

All this points to another Nixon, for whom politics was not merely an outlet for his pent-up rage, but also an instrument of solidarity. Even "positive polarization" was a means of building a constituency. Nixon understood that all elections, no matter how harshly contested, are finally exercises in consensus. They have to be. There is no other way to win a plurality of votes. And Nixon aimed for more than that. He envisioned a new majority—and he achieved it, one that far outlasted the permanent majority Karl Rove predicted in 2004. Nixon the master political strategist was best described by White: "Anyone who has talked to Richard Nixon, over a period of years and privately knows that, without ever avowing it, he has been running against Franklin D. Roosevelt since he began campaigning for office." Roosevelt! "He speaks of Roosevelt not with bitterness or disrespect or anger," White added, "but in a way that makes it clear in all conversation that his own measure of himself is a measure against" FDR. A powerful fact united these wholly dissimilar men. Only Nixon and Roosevelt "in all American history have run for office—Presidency or Vice-Presidency—five times," White wrote. "The easy record reads that Roosevelt won four, lost one, and Richard Nixon won four, lost one. Roosevelt, of course, scored heavier, but between them, these two men go down as the most enduring American politicians of the twentieth century, and they span a period of fifty years of continuing American revolution."

The essential word is "revolution." It was what the 1960s seemed to be undergoing—and not just to conservatives. In January 1969, right before Nixon took office, Richard N. Goodwin, the wunderkind of the Kennedy-Johnson years, published an extraordinary essay, called "Sources of the Public Unhappiness" in *The New Yorker*. The opinions he expressed didn't sound especially liberal. Goodwin called for "decentralizing the government" and criticized "federal housing programs" that "have failed miserably under the pressure of social demands for slum clearance and the creation of livable neighborhoods." He noted curious affinities between the left and the right in their defiance of "the 'power structure'" as detectable in "the recent pronouncements of George Wallace, the manifestos of the New Left, and the demands of black militants." Goodwin also noted the anxieties of the "urban white" voter whose "discontent is fed both by envy of the more prosperous and by anger at the blacks—not just because he fears the blacks but also because their problems, and not his, seem to be the focus of national concern. That is why it was possible for many members of this group to support [George] Wallace after having supported Robert Kennedy; both men, in very different ways, could be identified with their wants, and both conveyed a deep emotional sympathy with the importance of their fears and their plight."

Goodwin, who had campaigned for Eugene McCarthy, was not a likely candidate for the Nixon White House, unlike Daniel Patrick Moynihan. But both men were reacting to the same crisis—the decline of authority at a time of cultural disruption. It was conservatives who promised to restore that authority, for better or worse. Most liberals did not even notice its absence. But conservatives certainly did. "Although established liberalism certainly has deep ideological responsibility for nihilist radicalism," the conservative thinker Frank S. Meyer wrote in *National Review* in 1970, "it has also been the governing form of the social order in this country for the past forty years." The question was whether conservatives, organically opposed to the centralized state, would choose to uphold it—or help to hasten its collapse. Nixon chose to uphold it. It was the price of being a serious politician in a period of "continuing American revolution."

The story of Richard Nixon, like the story of modern conservatism, is not just a story of rage, but of a rage for order. Perlstein is right: the same voters who elected Johnson in a landslide in 1964 voted for Nixon in 1972. But it is important to understand why. They did so not because they had changed, but because they had not changed. In a period of extremisms, right and left, the majority of Americans stayed where they had always been—in the center. That was where they found Johnson in 1964, and where they found Nixon eight years later.

Today conservatism looks startlingly different. After eight years of resolutely partisan rule and an accumulation of failures, foreign and domestic, the Republican Party has abandoned the center, and every pillar of ideological conservatism has buckled. The best evidence of this is the emergence of John McCain, the first nominee in recent memory to capture the nomination despite the active opposition of the party's most entrenched constituents (though he is now doing his disheartening best to reassure them). This year's election, the first truly "open" one since 1952, is in some respects a mirror image of that one. In 1952, the Republican Party, after five consecutive losses, looked poised to reclaim the presidency. What, then, would be the fate of the New Deal? Would all its gains be revoked?

In *The Future of American Politics,* an important book timed with the 1952 election, the journalist Samuel Lubell, perhaps the era's keenest poll-watcher, saw that the feared outcome might actually be the best one:

> To solidify itself permanently in American life the New Deal needs at least one Republican victory. As long as the Republicans remain out of office it is possible for politicians on both sides to stir deceptive fears that the whole New Deal is at stake. But once in office the Republicans will automatically endorse much of the New Deal, through the simple device of leaving things untouched. Extreme right-wing Republicans, who talk as if they would repeal every law passed in the last twenty years, would find they had to accept much of the New Deal under Republican administrators. The more ardent Roosevelt followers would find that most of what is loosely called the Welfare State was here to stay.

That is exactly what happened. The Republicans chose a popular moderate who kept the New Deal in place. In our time, a conservative president, should one be elected, will serve us best by performing the opposite service. He will need to dismantle what remains of a movement that, in its last and genuinely decadent phase, has done America more harm than good. ◆

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